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February 12. 1910.

Mr. J. C. Rowell,  
University of California,  
Berkeley, Calif.

Dear sir:-

It gives me  
great pleasure to send  
you in this mail a copy  
of the biography of Rev. J. W. T.  
McNeil and I thank you  
for the honor of the request.

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

OF THE

1776-1789



His was a noble life of  
unselfish devotion to his  
fellowmen.

Most sincerely yours,  
Mary Carr Merritt  
727 S. Flower St.  
Los Angeles,  
Calif.





Rev. J. W. T. McNiel





# Rev. J. W. T. McNiel

## A Brief Biography

Compiled by

MARY CARR MERRITT

*"Teach us the lesson of his life  
The secret of his power."*



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Copyright 1909  
by  
*Mary Carr Merritt*

*To the Mother and Father  
who have been the inspiration and joy  
of his life  
is this book dedicated.*

*Mary Carr Merritt.*

“His purity of thought and feeling displayed the nobility of his nature. No coarse expression marred his spoken or written word.

“For all that was noble and tender and sweet he had a strong affection. He was one of those who desired to be pure in heart.”

*Sunday School Times.*



## Preface

Standing on a hill in the Shenandoah Valley we watched the sun as it crept slowly up the Blue Ridge mountains.

Here we could detect dim shapes and there watch the deepening shadows till almost before we were aware of it day was upon us and the sun was sending its influence of cheer and comfort over all.

Such was the life of Rev. J. W. T. McNiel. Growing up in the retirement of his Virginia home and so modestly taking his college honors we hardly knew that a man of worth was among us until we felt the silent power over our lives.

That we might gather together some of the treasures of this life and share them with others is the purpose of this book.

All of those who have contributed have done so out of a love that is "pure, precious and permanent."

It is our wish that in these chapters he may again speak to us and that through the inner vision we may look into those eyes, those soulful eyes, that told us of a desire to learn from the "peerless Teacher" and to serve mankind.

MARY CARR MERRITT.

Oct. 22, 1909.

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I  
BOYHOOD

Give us the faith that made him strong,  
Aggressive, bold and true;  
The zeal that ever prompted him  
The Master's will to do;  
The love that sought the fallen ones  
To lead them to the cross;  
The joy of knowing Thee, which makes  
All other gains but loss.



# I

## BOYHOOD

*By Miss Susie McNiell, a Cousin.*

Rev. J. W. T. McNiell was born near Rocky Mount, Franklin County, Va., Oct. 22, 1873. His father, Thomas J. McNiell, came from the hardy Scotch-Irish stock, and perhaps the perfectly balanced mind, the clear intellect and powers of perseverance that were dominant traits of the son, may be regarded as gifts from his fine Scotch ancestry. His mother was Miss Hudson, from a good old English family. Her life has been given to her children with a love and devotion rarely equaled and never excelled, and her sweetness of disposition, generosity, and other virtues were strong forces in moulding the character of her son. The earliest years of young McNiell's life were spent in happiest freedom on his father's farm. Long days filled with play and sunshine were his. Trudging in good-natured content after the men at work in the fields, rambling on the green hill-sides, fishing and playing in the little river or helping his mother about the house were his usual occupations as a little lad. Being of a merry and fun-loving disposition he was always willing and eager to join in the many pranks of his young comrades, and in his later years he often spoke with tender remembrance of the humorous incidents of these days.

At the age of five his education began in a little country school house and even at this early date he evinced signs of an unusually strong intellect. As he grew older he became very fond of study and his evening duties were promptly done that he might devote the later hours to his lessons.

So conscientiously did he spend his time that at the age of fifteen he had mastered the studies of the little school and taught it himself.

At thirteen he had commenced teaching in the Sunday School held in an old building used as a place of worship by a band of Baptists.

When in the early days the people met there to listen to the earnest message of their pastor, Rev. Samuel Mason, it seemed as if the very windows of heaven were opened and showers of blessings poured upon them. So earnestly did the pastor tell the gospel story in all its sweetness and simplicity and so conscientiously did his little flock aid him that a great revival of religion was their reward.

Among the many who professed faith in Christ and were baptized was young McNiel, then only fifteen. Turning his face into the light of God he firmly resisted temptation; and, his young soul thrilling with the hope and enthusiasm of youth, looked into the years of the dim future and saw, perhaps, the many things he was to do for his Redeemer.

He resolved to give his life to the Master and daily studied the Bible for divine truth. Going out into the quiet shade of the trees where he could be face to face with God, he sought and found through prayer and careful study that most blessed wisdom and inspiration of all the ages.

The beauty and uprightness of his Christian character soon became evident in his influence upon his associates. He continued teaching in the Sunday School and spent much time in the study of the lesson and preparation of notes for illustrations. For the next two years we find him living this truly beautiful life, in summer working with his father on the farm and in winter going to school. Ever present was the ambition to serve the Master in a worthier and more perfect manner.

In the autumn of 1890, at the age of seventeen, he entered Glade Spring Academy at Glade Spring, Va., to take a preparatory course for Richmond College. He was in this school for two years and won the marked approval of the teachers by his diligence in study, manly bearing and purity of life. When this course was completed he turned to Richmond where he was to distinguish himself as a student



and orator. How eagerly he looked forward to the life before him, in all its phases!

As we look over even this part of his life we are led to exclaim, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift."



II  
COLLEGE DAYS

God's boundless Love and arching sky  
Above us when we wake or sleep,  
Above us when we smile or weep,  
Above us when we live or die.

God's endless Love! What will it be  
When earthly shadows flee away,  
For all Eternity's bright day,  
The unfolding of that Love to see!

*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

## II

### COLLEGE DAYS

*By Rev. W. L. Richardson.*

Mr. McNiel was born at a time when there was a growing recognition of the importance of an education. The many improvements and general progress of the age created many problems, the solution of which requires the best trained minds. The natural desire for knowledge has stimulated the minds of men to an effort unrivaled, perhaps, since the days of the Italian Renaissance.

Living in an age when the intellectual demands are so great and having decided to enter the gospel ministry, Mr. McNiel was not content with any thing less than the best preparation. To him it was folly to enter the arena of life not having on the whole armor of a well trained mind.

As Moses spent eighty years, or two-thirds of his life, in preparation for the forty years' service, so it can be said of the subject of this sketch—by far the greater part of his life was spent in equipping himself to lead his fellow-men from the bondage of sin to the soul's freedom. Again, as Moses departed this life just at the time when, humanly speaking, he was about to receive his reward, so Mr. McNiel was taken a little before the close of his search after knowledge, and was about ready to enjoy his most coveted earthly reward—the dedication of himself and all his accomplishments to the service of God and humanity. As at the time when the Israelites were about to begin their numerous and hard fought battles it seemed that the presence of Moses was essential to their success, so in this day when the conflicts with intellectual and spiritual darkness are being fought with the greatest severity, to all that knew Mr. McNiel it seemed most unfortunate to lose his counsel and leadership. But in both cases a God of wisdom willed it so.

Being born in Franklin County, Va., near the county seat, Rocky Mount, he attended the public schools. Here it was said of him, "he learned fast." He enjoyed the full measure of this honor. He would either stand at the head of his class or greatly annoy the one who did. He participated freely in the debating (not literary) society of the neighborhood when the members had under discussion questions of such ponderous weight as: Resolved, "That fire is more destructive to property than water," or "That a gun is of more importance to man than a dog." Though in eloquence he may not have equaled Cicero when exposing the conspiracy of Cataline to the Roman senate, yet in earnestness he might well be considered his rival.

He graduated from Glade Spring Academy in 1892. During these years there grew upon him daily the impression that God had called him to the work of the ministry. It was the one duty of his life. The natural man argued, the spiritual man triumphed. The selfish propositions were ordered to the rear, the unselfish made to lead. That unselfishness was one of his characteristics until the day of his death.

Later in life he heard a powerful discourse on unselfishness delivered by a visiting minister in the Grace Street Baptist Church, Richmond, Va., from the text: "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it beareth much fruit." (John 12:24.) On returning to his room he said to his companion: "The thought of that text and sermon is the key to the most useful life; that answered all my objections to entering the ministry. If a man accomplishes much in this life for truth and humanity, he must die to self interest."

This high ideal began to be his goal even in his academic days, and was God's own appointed way to turn him into the channel of service for which he was so eminently fitted.

Having once for all time yielded he felt even a greater need of cultivation of mind and he would not excuse himself with any thing less than the best the land could afford.

Accordingly in September, 1893, he entered Richmond



College, Richmond, Va. He had the good fortune of being well prepared to take up the college work and pursue the same with no severe tax upon his mind. Possibly he could have entered some of the classes of the second year's course, but he highly valued the importance of doing foundation work well. He believed that in order that intellectual houses might stand they must be "founded upon a rock." This rock was sought by digging deep for Greek roots and mastering the fundamentals of other languages and sciences whose fields of wealth he attempted to make his own. In this ground work he was very painstaking.

He had in his favor the best of instructors. Among them were Prof. H. H. Harris, who was acknowledged one of the leading Greek scholars of the South, and who spent the last years of his life as Professor in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.; Prof. Edmund Harrison, that master of the Latin language, now President of Bethel Female College, Hopkinsville, Ky.; the learned Dr. S. C. Mitchell; Prof. F. W. Boatwright, President of Richmond College, and many others of exceptional ability.

As a student he was above the average; he was one of the best—best in applying himself and best in attaining results.

As the thirsty traveler of the desert longs for the fountain of water with which to refresh his languishing soul so had Mr. McNiel yearned for this fountain of knowledge.

He did his best in the hours set apart by himself for study and the physical exercises were entered into with the most jubilant spirits. When he returned to his room he seemed to forget everything but the book before him.

To the other members of his class he rendered frequent and valuable aid. His quick and retentive mind enabled him to master his subject in less time than others; and when this was done he cheerfully and freely shared with his fellow students the fruits of his own labors. It was almost a daily occurrence to see one or more wending their way to his room asking his assistance. He took delight, not in

his superiority over his fellow students but in every opportunity of rendering assistance. The idea of helping was most pleasing to him.

With a mind naturally bright and time well spent, the day of his reward was not far away. Soon the time came when the President of the college in his annual distribution of diplomas began to deliver some to Mr. McNiel. At the close of the session of 1897-1898 he had received enough to entitle him to the degree of Bachelor of Arts. This in turn was used as a stepping stone to the highest academic honor of the college, the Master of Arts degree, which he won the next year, 1899.

This accomplishment would have satisfied many, but not so with Mr. McNiel. His desire for the best training led him at once to begin preparation for a course in the University of Chicago, which he took after a year's pastorate in Gordonsville, Va., his physician having advised him to take at least this much rest. But his worth was too well known to allow him much rest. As soon as it was known that he was going to Gordonsville an effort was at once made to induce him to accept in addition to his pastoral work the principalship of the Piedmont Academy. The pressure was so great that he finally yielded. Though he had this unusual amount of work to do he made a wonderful reputation as an instructor. He was greatly blessed in his church work and endeared himself not only to the members of his church and pupils of the school but to all classes of people and the ministers of the town. Here he was married to Miss Annie Stanard Goodloe, the highly accomplished daughter of Mr. Spotswood Goodloe, Gordonsville. She was a graduate of the Woman's College, Richmond, Va. Directly after their marriage they went to the University of Chicago, where she died six months later.

To be complete an education must not only have the benefit of faithful class work but also that of a literary finish. An application of this fact brought about the formation in Richmond College of two literary societies—the Philolo-

gian and Mu Sigma Rho. Though membership in either is not determined by profession, the majority of ministerial students are members of one while those in the law department usually choose the latter. Mr. McNiel was a loyal Philologist. He loved to sing her praises and did what he could to promote her success. He was frequently heard on the floor advocating or opposing some proposition. It is no exaggeration to say that none had more influence in this department than he, and but few had as much. His good business and executive ability won for him the highest office the society could bestow, that of president. Unless the writer is mistaken Mr. McNiel was the first in many years to be elected by acclamation.

Not only in business debate was he strong but was especially so in literary discussion. His diction was free and easy; his arguments were well arranged; and he had the art of winning the sympathy of his opponents rather than repelling them. But his greatest attraction was his unusual power of eloquence. People said, "He is a natural born orator." Perhaps the secret of his power lay in the fact that he was "natural." If he used thoughts of others at all he first incorporated them into his own being, made them his own thoughts, and proclaimed them with all the personal conviction of the author. He was completely free from mechanical gestures; and those that he did make were the expression of his own soul.

Each year these two societies gave jointly a medal to the best orator of the college. During these contests the rivalry between them is at the highest pitch. At times this interest becomes excitement and afterwards leads to adverse criticism of the judges when the medal goes "the wrong way." At the close of his graduating year Mr. McNiel was one of the representatives of the Philologist Society. The evening of the contest brought the usual large audience. The orations were delivered amid much applause, sometimes because of merit and at others for effect upon the judges. When the judges returned they listened to the chairman as he told how all of them were on the road to

fame and how much he regretted that he did not have a medal for each, but as he had only one it would be awarded to him who had so clearly won it. They were almost breathless as he lifted a card on which was written the name of the winner and said in substance, "With one accord we have awarded this medal to Mr. J. W. T. McNiel." With equal unanimity the audience burst forth in wild applause. Congratulations from all the contestants as from all members of both societies and many visitors were showered upon him with the greatest freedom. It is now needless to say that the decision of the judges was accepted with no adverse criticism.

As in many of the states so in Virginia there was a further stimulus to oratorical effort. Nine colleges of the state, including the University of Virginia, sent their medal winners to Salem to contest for the state orator's medal. Mr. McNiel, having won the medal at Richmond College, was entitled to enter this contest. How anxious were all that this honor should be brought to Richmond!

As the time approached the interest became intense. "Will Richmond win?" was a question that weighed heavily upon the hearts and minds of all. At the hour when the battle was being waged there could be seen groups of students discussing the probability of McNiel's success. At a late hour when they were satisfied that the contest was over, the hope, yea the faith that McNiel had brought that honor to Richmond quieted the nerves of many and put them to rest. They somehow felt he had gained the victory. Very early the next morning, while nearly all were still slumbering, one over anxious young man holding in hand a copy of "The Times" came down the hall by leaps and bounds and yelling at the top of his voice: "Say, boys, McNiel got that medal!" "Hurrah for McNiel!" echoed scores of voices behind closed doors. Like wild fire the news spread to every student and professor on the campus. When the down town students came in and learned what this meant they also entered fully into the spirit of the hour. In the midst of the noise an occasional voice could



be heard to say: "Just as we expected; we knew McNiel would do it." When the train upon which he returned arrived it was met by about a hundred students. They obtained permission from the policeman to cheer, and when the successful contestant emerged from the stream of passengers, the cheer was swelled to almost a deafening volume, so delighted were they to bestow honor on him "to whom it was due."

Though very busy in other departments, Mr. McNiel was very attentive to religious work. His life at college was a standing refutation of the idea that students have no time for religious or "outside work." He was one of the foremost workers in the college Y. M. C. A. and when a number of "room classes" were organized for a special study of the Bible he was promptly elected one of the teachers. His class selected the "Parables of Christ" as their special line. In this difficult field he led the class with marked ability.

His college life was made more useful also by the amount of preaching he did. Early in the second session while doing much scattered supply work he was called to the pastorate of the Potomac Baptist Church, in King George County, Va., which he served for four and a half years. Although he was very busy with college duties he did in this church a most acceptable work as was shown by the resolutions adopted by the church when he resigned, also by the fact that on hearing of his death, eight years afterward, they held in honor of his memory a memorial service participated in by representatives from every part of a large section of country.

During his vacations he did much evangelistic work in which God greatly blessed his labors. In one meeting not far from the church mentioned above, over fifty souls professed faith in Christ.

In all the "northern neck" of Virginia there are many that will "rise up and call him blessed." This seed sown, this abiding impression made during his busy college days. Yet he did not allow it to interfere with his class work, though

the pastoral part necessitated the loss of much time from college.

On the part of most people there is a tendency to eulogize unduly their friends after death; especially is this true when the realm of the inner man is discussed. But from man's viewpoint Mr. McNiel was to his companions a model Christian. He enjoyed the confidence and highest respect of the entire student body.

His success had not the effect of making him vain or creating a desire for personal compliments. In the midst of honor he was one of the most humble. When he won his orator's medal his room-mate was at home attending the bedside of a dying sister. After her death he returned to the college and lived in the room with Mr. McNiel more than a week before he knew of his having won the medal; and then was told by another student. So free from boasting was he that his thoughts turned to the sorrows of his room-mate rather than to his own honors.

His fellow students saw him tried as but few are and learned from him how a Christian can bear up under the demands of God, which in this case were unusually trying. Yet he faced these trials with the courage of a David. He neither borrowed trouble nor, when it came, did he chafe under it.

While at college death twice invaded his home taking his two remaining sisters, but his courage did not falter. Like Job he was able to say, "The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away: blessed be the name of the Lord," and so turned his mind from his sorrow to the discharge of present duty. That of itself was a powerful testimony to God's grace in his servant. This manly Christian courage made a deep impression upon his comrades and as these young men are scattered from the Atlantic to the Pacific so wide to-day is his influence. During this college course he had the unspeakable joy of baptizing his father and brother who were converted in his meetings.

What was God's purpose in Mr. McNiel's life and was that purpose fulfilled?



Since God's desire to impart his principles to man is so great and man's power of comprehension is so small it becomes necessary at times to leave the abstract for the concrete. This he did for Thomas who could not understand but by the nail prints. May not God have used Brother Mc Niel as the nail prints to many a young man who doubted the possibility of his own high attainment? Did he not labor under the greatest difficulties and attain almost the greatest height? Is not his life an unanswerable demonstration of the power of courage and effort? Will not God point to him many a young man faltering under difficulties and thus stimulate him to an effort that will lead to success? And will not these young men in turn thank God for such an example?

Servant of God, the world is blessed by thy well spent life. Enjoy now thy rich reward; for when thy summons came we can easily hear thy response: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."



III

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

“There is the quiet, gentle talk of a holy heart, immovably fixed on the one aim of always and everywhere confessing the Saviour.”

*A. W. Thorold, D. D.*

### III

## UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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### Mr. McNiel as a Theological Student

*By Dr. C. E. Hewitt.*

Mr. McNiel came to the Divinity School of the University of Chicago in the fall of 1900. He was more mature than most of our students and had more experience in preaching and Christian work. He was already ordained. By virtue of his experience, ability, and attractive personality, he very soon became widely and well acquainted, and filled a prominent place in the intellectual and social life of the institution.

Not many weeks of student life had passed, however, when it became manifest that his health was not robust. After six or eight months he left the school and accepted a call to the Maryland Avenue Baptist Church in Washington, D. C., for one year, at the expiration of which term he returned and went forward with his theological study. His experiences seemed to enrich and ripen his nature, and he became yet more decidedly a leader in the devotional life and work of the students.

Of his work in the Evangelistic Band another is to write, but it is worthy of note that his influence on the spiritual life of his fellow-students was ever stimulating and helpful. Students come to know each other more intimately, and in many respects more perfectly, than they are known by officers or members of the faculty, and the estimate in which one is held by his fellows is one of the best tests of his character and influence. It is only just to the memory of Mr. McNiel to say that no one stood higher in the respect and confidence of those thus intimately associated with him than he did.

He was also highly regarded by the members of the faculty, as a student, a Christian gentleman, and

as a preacher. It was in this last—his work as a preacher—that he was especially happy and effective. It soon became apparent from reports that came back when he went out to supply different pulpits here and there that he was an exceptionally able and interesting speaker, and that he impressed people by his intellectual ability, his Christian spirit, and his unaffected devotion.

It was with unspeakable regret on the part of all when it became manifest that his health required him to relinquish his studies and seek a more favorable climate. He had not then quite completed his course of study, and was never afterward able to do so.

So ended the career as a student of one of the noblest and best loved of the many who have in our Divinity School made preparation for their life work as ministers of the Gospel.

## Mr. McNiell in Association With His Fellows

*By Rev. James W. Durham.*

Mr. McNiell happily combined those qualities which drew to him many friends and made him an admirable companion and helpful associate. He was by nature genial, sympathetic and unselfish. These qualities combined with his noble ambition won for him hosts of friends and admirers who never lost their love for and confidence in him.

When I entered Richmond College, and during our three years there, he was one of the most popular "boys" of that institution. In fact, to the boys who belonged to his literary society, he was a kind of idol. The name of J. W. T. McNiell was to many of the members of the Philologian Society a clinching argument for the superiority of their society. His superior knowledge and wisdom above that of the average student made his acquaintances not only love but reverence him.

When I entered the University of Chicago it was a delight to me to be associated with him even more closely than at college. The first year of my stay at the university we lived next door to each other. We lived together like brothers sharing each other's purposes and plans. He never exhibited any childish familiarity, but was always manly in his associations. He hated all forms of sham and littleness. He loved truth and intellectual as well as moral honesty, and boldly did he contend for them. He never pretended to believe what he did not. He was not a time-server, nor a man who would "play to the galleries" for the sake of passing popularity. Such moral courage in private as well as in public life caused others, as well as myself, to recognize in him a man of strength and integrity, whose acquaintance was worth cultivating.

McNiell was of a cheerful disposition. He never tried to burden others with his troubles. While he loved the sympathy of his fellows, he never courted it by baring the sorrows of his own heart. His cheerfulness even in the



most distressing sorrows was simply remarkable, and he showed what a man can endure, who has a strong faith in the goodness and love of the Father. When I remember the sublime courage with which he bore the many sorrows that came to him, I can but feel that his was a large soul and strong faith.

The pain of all this he bore in silence only showing it by the manifestation of a sublimer faith, a sweeter disposition and an enlarged sympathy for the sufferings of humanity everywhere.

McNiel impressed his fellows as being a manly man, whether in the class room, on the athletic field, in private conversation or in the pulpit. This manhood he never sacrificed for the sake of popularity, nevertheless it made him popular and won to him those who love the true, the good and the beautiful. Those who have been privileged to know and associate with him have been left the inspiration of a noble character, a truly heroic soul, an unselfish spirit, toiling manfully amid increasing sorrows up the rugged road to God, only that he might come down and help those needing his healing touch.

IV  
POTOMAC, VA.

“The strength of gentleness,  
The might of meekness,  
The glory of courage unafraid,  
A constant love, a tenderness of weakness,  
Were in his face and life displayed.”

*Edward H. Griggs.*

## IV

### POTOMAC, VA.

In January, 1895, at the suggestion of Mrs. J. O. Kirk, wife of a former pastor of the church, the Potomac Church of King George County, Va., invited J. W. T. McNiel, then a youth and a student at Richmond College, Va., to supply for the church until they could get a pastor.

Brother McNiel continued to supply for the church until June, 1896, when by authority of the church at Rocky Mount, Va., of which Brother McNiel was a member, the Potomac Church called a council consisting of Rev. C. H. Ryland, D. D., Rev. Alfred Bagby, Rev. O. Elyson and Rev. W. W. Owens, who met at the Potomac Church on Wednesday, June 24, 1896, and after satisfactory examination proceeded to ordain Brother McNiel to the full work of the ministry.

The Hanover Church of this county having taken similar action regarding R. S. Monds, a fellow student of Brother McNiel in Richmond College, they were ordained at the same time and place by the same council.

Immediately after the ordination of Brother McNiel he was elected pastor of the church and entered upon his first pastorate September 1, 1896. He continued to serve as pastor while pursuing his studies at Richmond College until August 20, 1899, when on account of failing health he resigned. That the church was very reluctant to part with him is shown by the following resolutions passed by the church at the time.

It having been necessary on account of ill health that our beloved brother and pastor, Rev. J. W. T. McNiel, should terminate his pastoral relations with this church; therefore be it

*Resolved:* I. That we desire to express our high appreciation of Brother McNiel as a faithful, consecrated minister

of the Gospel of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and that it is with sincere sorrow we agree to sever the very pleasant and profitable relations that have existed between us as pastor and people for the past four and a half years.

*Resolved:* II. That a copy of these resolutions be spread upon our church records and a copy be furnished our Brother McNiel.

WILLIAM J. ROGERS,  
Church Clerk.

V

WASHINGTON, D. C.

"His being working in my own,  
The footsteps of his life in mine."

*Peloubet's Notes.*



## V

### WASHINGTON, D. C.

*By Rev. R. S. Owens.*

In September, 1902, Mr. McNiel was persuaded to accept the pastorate of the Maryland Avenue Baptist Church, Washington, D. C., for one year before returning to the University of Chicago.

In this time eighty-four members were added to the church—forty-seven by letter and thirty-seven by baptism.

He was an indefatigable and faithful worker; one who has learned the secret of a true pastor, by knowing his people, of both church and congregation, in their homes. Making from seventy-five to eighty calls per month, he found out their needs and soul-desires, and responded around the home-circle as well as in the pulpit.

At the time of his resignation he was held in the highest esteem by all who knew him, and had written his name indelibly upon the hearts of the people with the pen of service, which is shown by the resolutions offered at the time his resignation was accepted:

WHEREAS, It has been deemed best by our beloved pastor, Rev. J. W. T. McNiel, to sever his relation as pastor of our church, in order to fit himself for the great work to which he has been called, therefore be it

*Resolved*, That we, as the members of the Maryland Avenue Baptist Church of Washington, D. C., will ever hold in grateful remembrance the noble self-sacrifice displayed by him in laying aside his cherished plans and discontinuing his studies for one year to serve us;

That by his untiring efforts and devotion to the Master's cause in this community he has won the admiration of us all;

That by this separation we lose an efficient pastor, an enthusiastic leader and a loving friend;

That he leaves us with our best wishes and prayers for his future success in the Master's kingdom.

Done by action of the Maryland Avenue Church of Washington, D. C., on the first day of September, 1903.

VI

ALBUQUERQUE, N. M.

"In his simple naturalness, gentle sensitiveness, absolute sincerity, quiet courage, incessant considerateness, unwearied self-forgetfulness, we see what makes preciousness and points to the beauty of all human friendship."

*A. W. Thorold, D. D.*

## VI

### ALBUQUERQUE, N. M.

*Introduction by Dr. C. E. Hewitt.*

Broken health made it necessary for me to spend the first three months of 1904 as a vacation in California. While there I learned to my surprise and sorrow that Mr. McNiel was unable to continue his studies in the Divinity School of Chicago and that on advice of his physician he was to seek a more favorable climate in the west.

Knowing his ability and attractiveness as a preacher, I began to look about for a vacant pulpit. No opportunity appeared until, on our return east, Mrs. Hewitt and myself stopped for a week early in March at Albuquerque, of which we had heard much as a health resort. On our arrival we found that Rev. H. G. Powell, a former friend, then pastor of the Baptist Church, was about to close his pastorate and move from the city. It occurred to me that this would be a suitable place for Mr. McNiel, and that he would be a most acceptable supply for that pulpit and a desirable man to fill the office.

The retiring pastor was pleased with the prospect that the church might secure at once so good a man, and joined me in advising the church to invite Mr. McNiel to fill the pulpit for a time, with the possibility of his becoming permanent pastor.

In accordance with the suggestion, the church wrote him at Santa Fe, N. M., where he had gone, inviting him to preach for them at his earliest convenience. He accepted the invitation and so soon won the hearts of the people that they called him to the pastorate.

It was manifest, however, that he ought not to undertake alone to minister to all those to whom the churches in such a place should carry the cheer and consolation afforded by the gospel of Christ.



Conference with Pastor Powell made it evident that the demand for Christian sympathy and help in that resort for invalids was excessive. The opportunity to "go about doing good" as the Master Himself did was unlimited, and the opportunity to those having the spirit of the Master was a call to duty. The Baptists must do their share of this work. The local church, with its limited membership, could not, unaided, do this. The retiring pastor had been nearly crushed in the endeavor to meet urgent demands and was compelled to relinquish the task.

In view of this situation, and at the suggestion of Mr. Powell, I formulated an appeal to the Women's Baptist Home Mission Society to send a missionary to that field to work in connection with and under the advice of the pastor of the church. Towards the support of such a worker Pastor McNiel generously pledged \$200 a year from his own moderate salary.

The Women's Society, through Miss Mary G. Burdette, gave kindly consideration to the appeal and a little later appointed Miss Mary Carr Merritt to render the service. She began her work December 1, 1904, and continued it a little over two years.

Some record of what was accomplished may appear in this volume; a record more accurate and complete finds place in God's "book of remembrance."

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The three years of Mr. McNiel's pastorate in Albuquerque were marked by the closest fidelity to the Master's work and his deep interest in humanity. It was a rare privilege to listen to sermons of such ability and moulding power; sermons which revealed a large and vigorous soul and ever led the hearer to nobler heights. To illustrate this we will share with the reader the following beautiful poem, written by Mr. W. H. Worth, in memory of a sermon preached by Mr. McNiel, November 19, 1905, "Abide With Us," the text being Luke 24:29:



## TO MY BELOVED PASTOR:

Abide with us, for evening draweth near,  
The lone disciples prayed;  
The day is spent, the way is dark and drear,  
And storm-clouds lower o'er head.

Our hearts are sad, as silently we go,  
Or speak but of our grief;  
No words can measure the despair and woe,  
Or minister relief.

A stranger, thou, indeed! or thou hadst known  
The awful tragedy,  
Scare three days since, that to the world was shown  
On cruel Calvary.

We thought the Christ had once among us stood;  
We saw his wondrous power,  
And trusted that the Lord had visited  
His Israel in that hour.

He called us each by name to follow him;  
How gladly we obeyed,  
Forsaking all, counting it joy to win  
The Hope so long delayed.

But now 'tis night, and not a star doth pierce  
The blackness of our sky;  
That hand, which dried so oft the mourner's tears,  
Cold in the grave doth lie.

For wicked hands, inspired by fiendish hate,  
By blinding passion led,  
Have crushed that life, so warm and true of late,  
And hope (not love) lies dead.



But fellowship with him would bid us look  
Not to our griefs alone;  
The broader love, of which his life partook,  
Made the world's woes his own.

The night draws on to thee, the way is long,  
And dangers may be near;  
Without are lurking foes, stealthy and strong;  
Come, tarry with us here.

Thy sympathy sincere has power to turn  
E'en sorrow's tears aside;  
Thy words of love have made our hearts to burn;  
Come, and with us abide.

Constrained thus, he enters in, and lo!  
What glory greets their eyes;  
In welcoming a stranger, they behold  
The Master in disguise.

Their risen Lord! He whom they mourned as dead,  
Their guest, but now their host;  
As of old, he blessed and brake the bread;  
In joy their fears are lost.

O living Christ, come and with us abide,  
Not as a transient guest,  
But as our Saviour, King, Defender, Guide,  
And our abiding rest.

We, too, have felt thy words within us burn  
With energy divine;  
And, listening to thy voice, we still would learn  
To mould our lives by Thine.

We have no bounties, Lord, to offer thee,  
Nought but a heart of love;  
And that would ever cold and lifeless be  
Lest quickened from above.

But thou hast loved us, and our hearts respond  
As turns the sun-kissed flower ;  
Draw thou and keep us in that deathless bond,  
Thy changeless love and power.

Help us to open wide to thee the door ;  
Loosen each secret spring,  
That thou mayest come and dwell forevermore,  
Our Master and our King.

His pastoral duties were planned to reach the largest number of sick, sorrowing, and the many lonely strangers, at the same time not neglecting the members of his flock who were more fortunate.

Every suffering heart appealed to him, regardless of name and creed, and only the recording angel knows all the hours, early and late, which he spent by a lonely death-bed, or with stricken hearts at the train. He made real to us the words, "The wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceful, courteous, not self-willed ; full of compassion, and kind actions free from favoritism and from all insincerity."

It was in the fall of 1905 that his drives through the northwestern part of town impressed him with the large territory covered by no church and in which there were many members of his own church who were too ill to go so far to service, and he felt that if they could not go to the church, the church should go to them ; so, together with the solicitation of a number of the residents, he began Neighborhood Prayer Meetings, the first being in the home of Mr. I. A. Dye. After holding a number of such meetings, Holden Mission was organized. The Lord prospered the work, and in January a tent-house was built which was dedicated February 4, 1906. He was prevented by illness from being present, but he arranged the entire program and sent a letter written for the occasion and read by Mr. W. K. Preston, which revealed his deep interest :

*To the Members of Holden Mission:*

Dear Friends:—It is with deep regret that I am deprived of being with you on this happy and significant day. Though unavoidably kept away, I rejoice with you in the splendid successes that have already crowned your labors.

I wish to avail myself of this privilege publicly to congratulate you upon the constant and uniform progress the work of the mission has made from the beginning to the present day. This good beginning promises a strong and useful life for Holden Mission. And in addition to the encouragement gained from past successes, you have the supreme assurance of future success from the fact that this is God's work and you His co-workers.

While unable thus far to attend any of the services of the mission, I have, nevertheless, known of every step in the work, and I have rejoiced to see such a beautiful spirit of Christian service on every hand.

You have not been lashed into this enterprise. You have approached it voluntarily and have thus shown a genuine desire to be true to your Heavenly Father and to render service to your fellow-men as opportunity may afford and the Master may direct. Nothing, in my mind, makes this work more promising than the spirit of spontaneity which seems to pervade the whole mission. This is evidence of the Divine leading, and it will surely result in the Divine blessing.

If I may be allowed a word of admonition, I should like to say: In your Christian service do not narrow and restrict your vision of duty and love to your own community, but rather adopt the better and more blessed way of keeping before your mind the good of the kingdom at large. In this way you can most beautifully serve Him whose dominion some day will cover the whole earth.

May you have that joy and peace which filled the Master's mind in doing the Father's will. And when reverses and trials come, remember, "His cross is not greater than His Grace." Yours fraternally,

February 4, 1906.

J. W. T. McNIEL.

After this period his health so greatly improved that he was often able to meet with them, and took a special delight in the service. Happy in returning strength, we find him devoting himself most assiduously to every detail of his work. For nearly the entire year following he pursued his course with an energy his friends could not restrain, but so modest was he about it all that almost no one had any idea of the immense amount of work he was doing. However, it had been apparent to the missionary for some time that he was making more calls than the average minister in robust health.

He not only visited and preached, but he sang comfort into aching hearts. January 6, 1907, in connection with his morning service, when his text was from I Cor. 15:58, he sang the accompanying solo most impressively:

### I THANK THEE, LORD.

For the cross that, day by day,  
Brings me unto Thee to pray;  
For the agony and strife,  
For the bitter in this life,  
I thank Thee, Lord.  
Patience unto him is born  
Who a crown of thorns has worn.

For the path so dread to me,  
That in fright I cling to Thee;  
For the chasm's yawning deeps,  
For the peril-laden steeps,  
I thank Thee, Lord.  
Then it is I hear Thee say:  
"Fear thou not; I am the Way."

For the night when it comes on  
Like the darkness ere the dawn;

For those hours when faith must be  
All the guide that leadeth me,  
I thank Thee, Lord.  
Then I know how needless sight,  
If Thou only art my light.

NELLIE A. MONTGOMERY.

January and February were marked by that same tireless, self-forgetful devotion, nothing moving him from his sense of duty, unswerving to the end. Sunday, March 3rd, he preached, as usual, morning and evening, and we are fortunate in having the outline of each sermon, both of which are here given. These notes were found in his Bible as he had left them on Sunday.

#### NOTES OF MORNING SERMON.

The Lame Man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple.

Text, Acts 3:6—"But Peter said, Silver and gold have I none, but what I have, that I give thee."

Introduction: The story of Peter and John going into the temple.

I. Today the world's needy and suffering sit at the gate of the temple and look to the worshipers of God for help.

1. The idea of charity and helpfulness are associated with the Christian religion. (a) Jesus set the example of helpfulness.
2. It is Christianity and her devotees who build hospitals, insane asylums, orphanages, and go as angels of light to the dark places of want and misery.

Illustration: When the Chinese commissioners were in Chicago, they were taken about by a delegation of citizens to see the sights—the railway stations, stock-yards, factories, etc. One of



the chiefs of the commissioners being asked what impressed him most, replied: "The hospitals, Hull House and Y. M. C. A. work." These they did not have in China.

3. If a professed follower of Christ proves discouraging and unhelpful, he is branded a hypocrite, for helpfulness is expected and demanded of a Christian.
4. Contrast conditions now with those of Pompeii and Babylon. Call up an old-time citizen of each and show our good sides, and also our bad ones, which are relics of the past.

II. After all, the Gospel does not aim *directly* at improving men's circumstances; it aims at improving men themselves.

1. The primary object of Christianity is not to give silver and gold, but life, wholeness of life, abundant life. The lame man's restoration was worth more to him than much fine gold. A church is not first of all a charitable institution. Her work is to build up character through Christ and His Gospel.
2. When mankind once gains moral and spiritual health, material improvements and blessings will follow. Charity is not Christianity, but a fruit of the Spirit.

Conclusion: He who looks up to God from a state of sin and helplessness will get more than he ever asked or dreamed. So with the lame man at the gate. God gives abundantly above all that we can ask or think.



## NOTES OF EVENING SERMON.

"Thy will be done" - A Prayer of Consecration -  
 Text, Matt. 26<sup>39</sup> & 42 and Matt 6<sup>10</sup> -

Intro. - The genius of the Xian religion calls for voluntary service, not forced. It must be inspired by love, and all service must be the offering of love -

I show how this prayer of the text is one of consecration

1. Contrast submission and Consecration.
2. This the meaning, too, of "For Christ's sake".

III. What is God's will?

It is answered in God's work in the history of the world.

1. "He forgiveth all thine iniquities" - Man sinning, God forgiving
2. "He healeth all thy diseases" - Man sick, God healing
3. "He redeemeth thy life from destruction" - Man destroying himself, God rescuing him from his self-destruction -
4. "He crowneeth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies" - Man sinking in the much-look, God proffering him coronation -

Conclusion - So join God in this task - this is consecration -

"Not in dumb resignation we lift our hands on high;

Not like the numbed fatalist, Content to do and die.

Our faith springs like the eagle Who soars to meet the sun,  
 And cries exulting unto Thee, 'O Lord, Thy will be done!'"

Monday and Tuesday were spent as usual. The last letter he wrote was one of sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. C. E. Hulbert, March 5, 1907, upon the death of Dean Hulbert. Tuesday evening after supper several of the boarders gathered about the piano as he selected and sang, "One Sweetly Solemn Thought," by Ambrose. How true were the words: "It may be I am nearer home, nearer now than I think."

The next morning about break of day, with scarcely a moment's warning, he was not, for God took him. The shock of his death was felt in every part of town. In their deep grief, all grades and classes of people were saying: "We have lost a friend."

The funeral was held in the church Friday, March 8, at 3:30 p. m., and conducted by the Ministers' Association. The crowded house, bountiful floral offerings and impressive service attested in some measure the love of the people. At the close of the service the body was taken to the train, escorted by the ministers, and started on its long journey to rest in his loved Virginia home.

The following program was carried out at the service:  
Organ Prelude—Funeral March (from Sonata op. 26)

..... Beethoven  
Hymn—"My Jesus, As Thou Wilt," 1st and 3rd verses  
Scripture Reading.....Rev. E. Moser, Evan. Luth. Church  
Prayer.....Rev. J. C. Rollins, Methodist Episcopal  
Hymn—"Jesus, Lover of My Soul," 1st and 2nd verses  
(Tune, "Refuge.")

Address.....Rev. H. A. Cooper, Presbyterian  
Address.....Rev. J. W. Barron, Congregational  
Duet—"My Father Knows".....

.....Mrs. Silbernagle and Mrs. Miller  
Address.....Rev. J. H. Heald, Congregational  
Resolutions adopted by the Ministers' Association read by  
Rev. E. E. Crawford, Christian Church.

Solo—"One Sweetly Solemn Thought" (Ambrose).....

..... Mrs. Silbernagle  
Prayer and benediction.

Mrs. Rose Futrelle Gideon, organist.

The following, clipped from the "Morning Journal," expressed the sentiment of many hearts:

"Seldom has it fallen to the lot of a resident of Albuquerque to win the warm place in the hearts of its people that belongs to the late Rev. J. W. T. McNiel, pastor of the First Baptist Church, who was laid to rest yesterday with fitting honors. The funeral was held yesterday afternoon from the Baptist Church, all the local ministers taking part in the services. The following exceptionally strong resolutions, passed by the ministers of Albuquerque, show in what remarkable esteem this man was held by his fellows. The resolutions appear on the minutes of the Ministers' Association, of which Mr. McNiel was secretary, as follows:

"1.—It is the expression of this body that in the passing of Rev. J. W. T. McNiel, this city has sustained a loss that is irreparable. A manly man, a true citizen, a kind and loyal friend, an almost ideal Christian character, has departed from us to return no more. But the inspiration of his life among us can never fail, and our memory of him will always be God's call to us to come up higher.

"2.—It is also our deep conviction that the church of this city has lost one of its noblest associates and helpers. In a very real sense, Mr. McNiel belonged to the church universal. His broad views of Christian teaching, his spirit of unbounded fellowship for all Christian people, his utter freedom from denominational prejudices, his glad and hearty co-operation with every good work, all combined to make men of every faith feel that one of their brothers has passed away from us to the place where the fullness of God's love enables all followers of our common Master to live as one fold in the presence of one shepherd.

"3.—Especially do we desire to express our sincere sympathy for our sister church in her bereavement. They know out of the riches of a long association, more fully than we, how profound is their sense of loss. Rarely, indeed, has a man been so possessed of the combined qualities that make an ideal minister. His clear perception of the

truth, which is the inevitable and invariable result of a life of intellectual and moral honesty and purity; his eloquent presentation of it, his love for his people, which was too great to be confined to them alone; his genial, kindly disposition and sympathetic helpfulness, will make his place in this pulpit very hard to fill. His life was his best sermon.

"4.—Personally, we wish to pay our tribute to him as a man and brother minister. To know him was to love and admire him. His personality was a rarely beautiful combination of gentleness and strength. To him, to live was Christ, and to die is gain. His thoughts were God's thoughts, and his life was the expression of them. His intelligence was great, his heart was great, and they united in a great service to his fellow-men. The days of his earthly life were wisely spent, therefore the Great Law of Compensation has given him his liberation and his reward. He 'allured to brighter worlds and led the way.'

"The resolutions were signed by Rev. Hugh A. Cooper, Presbyterian Church; Rev. J. C. Rollins, Methodist Episcopal Church; Rev. J. W. Barron and Rev. J. H. Heald, Congregational Church; Rev. Ernest Moser, Lutheran Church; Rev. O. B. Holliday, Southern Methodist Church; Rev. Ernest E. Crawford, Christian Church, and Rev. W. W. Havens, Methodist Church."

AN EXTRACT FROM THE ADDRESS OF REV. HUGH A. COOPER  
DELIVERED AT THE FUNERAL.

"Thy Will Be Done." This is the text from which our brother preached his last sermon. As I have read this sermon it has seemed to me that Brother Mc Niel spoke with prophetic voice. The sermon breathes the spirit of the man. Though he did not know the end was so near, had he known it he would have said, "Thy will, not mine, be done." None would have been readier than he to recognize that "a man is immortal till his work is done."

From our point of view today it seems like a dark providence. We cannot understand it. All we can do is



in faith to repeat our dear brother's last text, "Thy will be done." "Even so, Father, for it seemeth good in Thy sight."

Those of us who knew J. W. T. McNiel know that he sought ever to make the will of God the plan of his life. This is what made his life so beautiful. This is why he was optimistic always. As Emerson said of Tennyson, "he had a beautiful soul." "There are," says Froude, "men who, wherever they go, create an epidemic of nobleness." McNiel was such a man.

One thing that always impressed me was his transparent *sincerity*. The word sincere comes from sine, "without," and cera, "wax." When the ancients were building mansions of marble, some workmen, then as now, were dishonest, and if there was a flaw in the marble, filled it in and glossed it over with wax, which soon dropped out and revealed the flaw. To avoid this there came to be introduced into the contract the words, *sine cera*, "without wax." Brother McNiel, as I knew him—and I knew him well—was sincere. All he did was in the open. What he believed he spoke. He stifled no conviction.

Another thing that impressed me and helped me was his *kindness*. He was the stranger's friend. He would go out of his way and bestow strength that he could ill afford in order to help another.

His very gentleness made him great. Though young in years, he was a man of exceptional ability. He was an earnest student and had a natural gift of oratory, but of these I need not speak. We all knew of these gifts and prized them.

How sadly we shall miss his helpfulness and counsel in our Ministerial Alliance. Though he was a loyal Baptist, in the larger sense he was a Christian, and his ambition above that of the individual church was the advancement of the kingdom of God.

"Servant of God! well done!  
Rest from thy loved employ;  
The battle fought, the victory won,—  
Enter thy Master's joy.

"The voice at midnight came.  
He started up to hear;  
A mortal arrow pierced his frame,  
He fell—but felt no fear.

"The pains of death are past,  
Labor and sorrow cease,  
And life's long warfare closed at last,  
His soul is found in peace.

"Soldier of Christ! well done!  
Praise be thy new employ;  
And while eternal ages run,  
Rest in thy Saviour's joy."

RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,  
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO, MARCH 13, 1907.

WHEREAS, Our Heavenly Father has, in His infinite wisdom, taken from us our beloved pastor, Rev. J. W. T. McNiel; therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That our church has lost a wise, kind and efficient pastor, one who possessed rare intellectual ability and withal a deep spirituality. His was a strong nature, yet his sweetness of disposition and gentleness of manner endeared him to all. He was magnanimous, and of no one can it be said more truly, "He was God's nobleman."

*Resolved*, That his memory will be a sacred legacy to our church, and will ever be an inspiration to higher and nobler living. We will not say "he is dead," but rather, he has entered God's presence, "where there is fullness of joy and at whose right hand there are pleasures forevermore."



*Resolved*, That we extend to the family, on whom the loss falls heaviest, our sincere sympathy, commending them to the great Comforter, who alone is able to sustain them in their sorrow.

*Resolved*, That a copy of these resolutions be sent to the family of our late pastor, and also that they be spread upon the church records.

MRS. MARY V. SHUTT,  
MRS. JOSEPHINE E. PRESTON,  
MR. C. D. GOFF,  
MR. J. A. HAMMOND,  
Committee.

The news of his death which had sped to his host of friends in all parts of the United States brought forth an universal expression of sorrow.

On August 4th a memorial service was held in Potomac, Va., the first church of which he was pastor. When we realize that it had been eight years since he left this pastorate, we see that the attachment between this church and pastor was most unusual.

## An Appreciation

*By Rev. Wilson J. Marsh, Albuquerque.*

My acquaintance with Rev. J. W. T. McNiel began about April 1, 1904, when he assumed the pastorate of the First Baptist Church of Albuquerque.

One morning I heard a knock at my study door. Upon opening it I beheld a young man, tall and slender, wearing high-top boots and a broad-brimmed hat, his face bronzed from exposure to New Mexico sun and wind. The countenance, frank and open, at once commanded confidence, and I gave him a cordial welcome. Presently the stranger introduced himself as Mr. McNiel, the new pastor of the Baptist Church. For health reasons he had been spending much time out of doors engaged in his favorite exercise of horse-back riding. We spent a pleasant hour together, and thus began an acquaintance which ripened into warmest friendship. This friendship terminated only with his sad and sudden death, to be renewed some day, I fondly trust, in a better world and under fairer skies.

The two churches of which Brother McNiel and I were pastors are located only a block apart. It has been the custom for many years for the two congregations to unite during the summer months, giving each pastor a vacation in turn. For these reasons Mr. McNiel and myself were naturally closely associated. A mutual congeniality enhanced still further the intimacy and pleasure of our companionship.

I can truly say that the better I knew him, the more I admired and loved him.

Mr. McNiel was possessed of a singularly clear and penetrating mind. I heard him preach only a few times, but was impressed with these mental characteristics—originality, lucidity, and logical arrangement. He was not satisfied with the superficial, with that which would occur to the merely casual thinker. He loved to delve down deep, and to bring to light the hidden treasure. No matter how

profound the subject, no matter how diverse and various the sources from which he drew the original elements of his discourse, when they had passed through the crucible of his mind and came forth in the finished sermon, they appeared in the form of clear, orderly expositions of truth. His perceptions were keen, his grasp of a subject strong and comprehensive.

While one might admire Mr. McNiel for his intellectual talents and attainments, it was his qualities of heart that most endeared him to those who knew him best. He was of a kind and sympathetic nature. Above all was he imbued with the spirit of the Master, whose he was and whom he served. I have seen occasional flashes of a warm southern temperament, but that ardent nature was softened and subdued by the genuine Christian spirit. These heart qualities ennobled and vivified the intellectual in his preaching. In the delivery of his sermons there was a vast reserve of emotional power which might not be permitted expression; nevertheless his preaching was winning, effective and eloquent.

But Mr. McNiel was more than a preacher; he was a man. His life was as eloquent as his sermons; the two were consistent. What he preached on Sunday he practiced on Monday. From the pulpit he declared the doctrine of the universal brotherhood of man; then in private life he manifested this spirit in all his relations with others. While loyal to his own convictions, there was no sectarianism or bigotry in his attitude toward other Christians. As far as mutual sympathy was concerned, he and I were more like co-pastors over a single congregation than like pastors of two neighboring churches. The high esteem in which he was held throughout this community, and the universal sorrow over his premature death, bear testimony to the catholicity of his spirit as well as to the integrity of his Christian character. As a friend, Mr. McNiel was companionable and lovable. He was a man who easily made friends, and those who knew him well were warmly attached to him. He in return was loyal and devoted to his

friends. His bright mind, congenial disposition, ready conversational powers, made him a delightful comrade.

We wonder why it is that one so gifted, so useful, so loved, should be taken thus early in his promising career from the world in which he is so sadly needed. We can only bow in resignation to the will of Him "who doeth all things well." But our sorrow is not unmixed with rejoicing. Hope whispers of a brighter morrow, and faith proclaims, "We shall meet again."

"Green be the turf above thee,  
Friend of my better days.  
None knew thee but to love thee,  
None named thee but to praise.

"Tears fell, when thou wert dying,  
From eyes unused to weep,  
And long where thou art lying  
Will tears the cold turf steep.

"When hearts whose truth was proven,  
Like thine, are laid in earth,  
There should a wreath be woven  
To tell the world their worth."

## The Male Quartette, Albuquerque

*By Prof. J. N. Cadby.*

Knowing Mr. McNiel's highly refined, generous and sympathetic nature, one would expect him to be, as he was, a sweet singer. Somehow it fitted his disposition so well. Like his preaching, his singing was genuine; one knew that he thought of what he sang and believed what he was singing. His musical Virginian accent, his rich, clear tenor voice, and his oratorical powers, all combined to make his singing reflect his true, upright character and sympathetic disposition. He loved music, and sang even when he knew he was overtaxing his limited strength, because he believed in music as a means of elevating mankind.

As a director he was very good; his understanding of music, his enthusiasm and his untiring energies carried his male quartette over difficulties which would have caused most people to give up in despair.

He was not physically able to sing on Sundays, in addition to preaching, without greatly overtaxing his vocal organs, but he continued to sing with us until the end. He carried the burden of the quartette, selecting music, arranging rehearsals, and, what was no small task in the transient Albuquerque population, kept up the personnel of the quartette.

Those of us who were fortunate enough to sing with him and to hear him sing, and to come within the circle of his influence, thank God for McNiel, who was one of God's masterpieces, an oasis in our western desert, a shining light to the sick and dying; sympathetic, affectionate, encouraging and faithful "unto death." He has gone on to sing the new song, "where there is no more sickness, nor sorrow, nor pain, nor death."

Members of the quartette were: Mr. McNiel, Prof. J. N. Cadby, Dr. Palmer and Mr. Collister.



VII  
EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS



“He sank to rest as sinks the evening sun,  
A prayer upon his lips, “Thy will be done.”  
Wondering, we look toward the sunny skies,  
Half hoping there to see those pitying eyes;  
Those eyes so deep, so gray, so kind, so true,  
Those tender, friendly eyes—for me, for you!”

## VII

### EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

"He was responsible for the changed ideas of life that I had. He helped me to know what was really worth while in life, and to realize that there is something infinitely higher and better than this worldly life."

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"The sweetest picture in my memory of Mr. McNiel, and the one that came to my mind and dried the tears when I first heard the news of his passing, was when the Evangelistic Band was holding meetings at Hammond, Ind.

"It was Sunday night, the last meeting closing the series. The service was over, and the aftermeeting was lingering, the people loath to leave, and the Band loath to have some of them go who were still in the valley of decision.

"I had stepped into the vestibule with a young couple, who were leaving, and when I returned to the auditorium Mr. McNiel was again speaking, pleading for his Master, in tones so sweet and so musical. I remember being impressed with the beauty of his voice and the evident sweetness and kindness that pulsed through his earnest and tender appeal. Even then he had been sick during all the meetings. Perhaps it was the sense of anxiety and solicitude for our leader, which hung over all the fellows of the Band even in the work of the meetings, or perhaps it was the dread of what the end of this weakness might be to one whom we all cherished, but anyway I know my heart went out to dear old McNiel as he stood there, embodying it seems to me now something of the love of the Saviour, who forgot Himself and gave Himself for others.

"Mr. McNiel's leadership was perfect, but of no one could it be said more truthfully that 'His banner over us

was love.' His modesty was so genuine, and with all his gifts, he was yet so unassuming.

"One other picture of him, which is so fresh in my mind, I know you will be glad to hear.

"One day perhaps a score of us theologues were at our Divinity table in the beautiful men's dining room at the University. It was shortly before he left for Albuquerque. Somehow the conversation drifted to some knotty higher critical problem which partook of the nature of a doubt about something or other and the fellows were expressing various views, when McNiel spoke up in such earnestness but with that happy smile of his, and that little chuckle which he had, and said, 'Well, I don't care, *I know I have a Saviour*, and nobody can take him away from me.'"

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"It is wonderful what amount of work he crowded into his short life, with such ill health to fight against. He always lived near to God and that accounts for it."

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From a letter to his parents by Mrs. A. Holmboe, representing the Ladies' Missionary Circle of Albuquerque:

"Our blessed Lord has been pleased to find in His vineyard the rounded out and completed life of your noble son and has called him to higher realms of glory.

"We who have labored by his side, been guided by his wisdom, have sustained a great loss for his presence ever lifted us to that nobler life with Jesus. It has drawn us away from the muck-rake service to this world and shown us the joy and peace of a closer walk with God. In his very last message to us he could not have besought us more earnestly or left a more lasting impression.

"May you, in this dark hour, be able to say as sweetly and as resignedly as he did in his last words in the service, 'Thy will, O Lord, be done.' Think what it means to claim a son whose life has been so pure, whose character so

true, whose influence for the Master so far-reaching! Not only has our church learned to love him, but the whole city of Albuquerque is mourning his loss.

"As with our Saviour so with Brother McNiel, his sojourn in this world was thirty-three years.

"Oh, the lives that have been touched by his!

"His patient and enduring love for the brethren and his exalted Christian life will inspire us to a more consistent life for Christ."

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"I was most intimately acquainted with Brother McNeil. Though only a few years my senior, he baptized me and preached my ordination sermon. There was no man who took the place in my life that he did; and it was because of his high ideals and noble Christian character. The more I knew him the less was I surprised at his Christian manliness."

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"While I prize his sermons, which are rare, and all of his public work, the choicest after all is the man that is back of everything."

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Mr. and Mrs. W. of Cleveland, O., were in Albuquerque Christmas, 1906, and heard Mr. McNiel's Christmas sermon, and remarked to a member afterward, "We were saying as we came away from the church how much a sermon like that must cost; not in mental effort alone, but most of all in cultivation of heart and life! We can't understand how a little place like this can have such a man as that."

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From a letter written to Mr. McNiel by one of his members, June 1905:

"There is one thing you must not lose sight of, you are

a great blessing to us. It should comfort you greatly. All these invalids and their self-denying relatives need great spiritual sermons, not from a man who never was sick, but from one who suffers pain and self-denial as they do, then their words go home to their hearts and lives. It is as Paul said of Jesus, 'For we have not a high priest who can not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities but one who was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.' You suffer as they do here and you can reach their hearts and lives. God bless you in this great work, and speak through you to these people. You are an apostle to the consumptives, dear brother; God bless you!"

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From a member after he died:

"How much such sweet characters as Mr. McNiel's are missed in this world. If the world only had more like him how much better it would be. I always felt each time I heard Mr. McNiel that I was lifted a little higher. Each talk with him gave me a new thought."

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"When I met him last summer (Washington, D. C., 1906,) I told him I was glad to meet one man whom every one loved."

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"The message he brought to us (Pueblo, Colorado,) on Thursday evening has been often spoken of, but one little incident stands out more prominently than any other. It was one night when he had been in my home. You know there are some people you can get closer to than others. When I walked to the car with him he said, in referring to his health, 'God knows best and I am trusting Him.' These are common words, but they seemed to come to me with peculiar force, and have made an impression on my mind I never will forget."

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"He was my closest and dearest friend. We were in college together five years. No nobler character could be found anywhere. He was making his mark in the world and would have been one of our brightest lights."

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"I am so thankful I could attend the last prayer meeting he conducted on earth. These words come to me from his prayer, 'Dear Lord, if there is anything in our hearts that keeps us from Thee, take it away.' Not long before he died I went to hear him preach, though I am a member of another church. During the sermon he said, 'I am going to repeat some words that I have often used in your hearing, because I love them so. 'Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.' Then he spoke such beautiful words of comfort, 'when you are weary, heartsick, tired of the turmoil and strife of life, turn to Jesus, he will give you rest, peace.' I can not tell you the rest; I only remember tears ran down my cheeks as I listened to him."

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"I went into the college building and to the room we occupied. I stood there alone and thought of our past years and him whose life was so valuable to his companions. Honored he was and he deserves much honor."

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"The story of this song ('One Sweetly Solemn Thought') in the last two weeks of his life seems remarkable. In my memory it is sacredly dedicated to this funeral service and I do not wish to use it at another."

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The Baptist Standard, Chicago, Ill., introduces a long article by saying: "One of the ablest, most promising and



best beloved of recent students of the Divinity School has speedily followed our lamented Dean Hulbert to the better land."

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The Religious Herald of Richmond, Va., pays him a beautiful tribute from which we can quote but a few words:

"He was a preacher of exceptional powers, persuasive and thoughtful in his message, earnest in his work. He had a burning love for the salvation of souls, and many were converted under his able ministry."

VIII  
MEMORIAL SERVICES

THINE.

Whose eye foresaw this way?  
Not mine.  
Whose hand marked out this day?  
Not mine.  
A clearer eye than mine,  
'Twas Thine.  
A wiser hand than mine,  
'Twas Thine!  
Then let my hand be still  
In Thine,  
And let me find my will  
In Thine!

*Maltbie D. Babcock.*

## VIII

### MEMORIAL SERVICES

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#### A Memorial and a Tribute

*By Rev. W. Edgar Woodruff.*

Soon after the death of Mr. McNiel it was suggested that a simultaneous memorial service be conducted by his clergymen friends in their several churches. The memorial was delayed, however, for several months owing to the absence in the Orient of some of his most intimate friends. Upon their return the plan was carried out, and copies of the following letter, of which we give extracts, were mailed to all of his most intimate college and university friends. The letter itself is a good explanation of the spirit and purpose of the memorial:

"Minneapolis, Minn., Aug. 28, 1907.

"Dear Brother:

"For some time the friends of the late J. W. T. McNiel have had in mind a simultaneous memorial service, but the absence of some of his friends in the Orient has delayed it hitherto. But now such a service seems to be opportune.

"The plan in brief is as follows: (1) That all of his most intimate college and university friends who are in the pastorate be invited to co-operate. (2) That the morning or evening service of September 15 be made a memorial service in which his life and influence upon his fellows be made the basis of the message; or (3) That his character be used as illustrative of the truth of the hour.

"His friends feel that his life, though brief, was one of unusual usefulness and helpfulness, and that it may profitably be made the basis of a most inspiring message. Blessed is the man who wears a smile through sunshine

and through shower and can make a place of exile a place of cheer! Spiritual realities have been made more tangible to some of us because of his unwavering faith; the Unseen more inviting because he is there. As one of his friends you are invited to co-operate in this memorial."

It was not possible to reach some of Mr. McNiel's friends as their addresses could not be ascertained; others could not participate because of absence from their pulpits on vacation; while a few were not located in pastorates. There were doubtless other pastors who participated but failed to notify me. The following replied: Rev. Alva J. Brasted, Lisbon, N. D.; Rev. John M. Linden, Oregon City, Ore.; Rev. J. C. Garth, Napa, Cal.; Rev. John E. Ayscue, Greenville, N. C.; Rev. Charles B. Elliott, Breckenridge, Minn.; Dr. Rolvix Harlin, Dixon, Ills.; Rev. W. L. Richardson, Athens, W. Va.; Dr. John W. Bailey, Oskosh, Wis.; Rev. John H. Larson, New York, N. Y.; Rev. W. Edgar Woodruff, Minneapolis, Minn.; Rev. J. A. Shaw, Albuquerque, N. M.; Rev. Lester M. Burwell, Reno, Nev., pastor of First M. E. Church; Rev. W. J. Marsh, pastor of First Congregational Church, Albuquerque, N. M.

[The address that follows is substantially the sermon that the author of this article (and originator of the plan of memorial services) delivered on the occasion of the memorial, Sept. 15, and is reproduced here by request.—Ed.]

"The righteous shall flourish like the palm-tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."—*Psalms* 92:12.

In a much-worn Bible that was given me by Rev. J. W. T. McNiel when he was leaving Chicago for New Mexico, I find marked the words of our text. It was the Bible he used when a student in college. Its dilapidated condition bears witness to the service it had rendered. On looking it over I find that the torn and faded leaves are in themselves an index to McNiel's character. The Psalms, Isaiah, the Gospel of John and Paul's letters, especially Romans, bear unmistakable evidence as to the source and strength of his faith. Among the many marked passages in this book that was

his companion and inspiration, I find that of our text, and I take it as illustrative of both the beauty and influence of his life.

The beauty of the palm-tree was proverbial throughout the ancient East. The Bedouin all but worshipped it.

The tall, serene, majestic palm is a fitting picture of the righteous man. Encircling the oasis like a cluster of emeralds, or skirting the banks of the river like sentinels on duty, the palm beckons the weary and dust-covered caravan to rest and refreshment. The great personalities of the world, the real Giant Great Hearts, raise their heads above the barren wastes and commonplaceness of the rest of us as the palm above the cacti. They are to us a place of refreshment and cheer. So it was with McNiel. He was not the tall redwood of the California forests, awe-inspiring and depressing in its immensity, but he was a big brother whose friendship and help any one was proud to receive. No one ever felt the least hesitancy in going to him with the most perplexing soul problem. Just because his religion was of the muscular, athletic variety, free from the veneer of piestic phraseology, he readily became the councillor and friend of college and university men.

Many species of palm flourish amid desolate and desert environment. So the life of the righteous man stands out in striking contrast to the barren sage brush life of those about him.

In the early spring the desert is clad in a mantle of green, verily it blossoms as the rose. But let the scorching heat of summer fall upon it and its beauty fades in a single day. So the faith of many of us flourishes and is beautiful so long as we are bedewed with the moisture of love and friends and prosperity; but let the sun of life's shifting seasons fall full upon us and our faith and Christian sweetness withers like the desert grass! Not so the giant palm. Not so our friend McNiel.

Few young men have been put to the test of faith that he was and kept sweet. With him climax was followed by anti-climax, defeat (in health) followed on the heels of



victory, and grief close upon rejoicing. Graduated from college with honors and married to a beautiful young wife, they entered the University of Chicago with the full flush of hope and victory. A few months and his young wife is resting beneath the sod in her Virginia home, and he is shepherding the flock of the Maryland Avenue Baptist Church of Washington, D. C. After a year he again resumed his theological work in the University of Chicago. The Evangelistic Band, an organization of ten young theological students banded together for the purpose of doing evangelistic work in the vicinity of Chicago, had just been organized. Mr. McNiel, because of his experience in such work, was made leader. The organization met with unexpected success. At Michigan City, Indiana, as the result of three days of services the Band had the pleasure of seeing seventy-five persons surrender themselves to Christ and take him as Saviour and Lord. When we returned to the university the divinity students showed as much genuine enthusiasm over the work done as though we had been a football team returning from a victory. McNiel was the recognized champion. Many times before he had known what it meant to hear his name cheered as an athletic hero, but to know that he was the recognized leader of a "team" for Christ both pleased and humbled him. He was most happy, and the future prospects looked bright. He was soon to finish his theological course, and there were churches both East and West that were in correspondence with him relative to his future location. But no! Such was not to be his lot. Like a bolt from the blue the order of his physician came to go to New Mexico, there to wage a life and death struggle. Slowly and unnoticed the disease had crept upon him. His friends were the first to detect it and advised him to consult a physician, but his hopeful nature and the fact that he was an athlete was enough to deceive both himself and the first physician that examined him. By much persuasion he was finally induced to consult another doctor. I shall never forget the Sunday morning I accompanied him to the physician's office to receive the final verdict. The



doctor gave it to him and then advised him to leave Chicago at once for a more favorable climate, saying, "You have a fighting chance."

So near the realization of his dream of a completed theological training, a parish, and a home, and yet so far! "Exiled" said his friends, but let me hasten to say that he never spoke of it in that way.

Within a week he was leaving for New Mexico, not in dejection and discouragement but with faith in his heavenly Father and confidence that he was going to get well. His purpose was to go to Santa Fe and join a government ranger, who should help him to live his life in the open. But circumstances decreed it otherwise, and he soon found his way into a place of usefulness—a thing he would have done had he been banished to Siberia. Notwithstanding all these disappointments he remained steadfast, unshaken, hopeful. Oliver Goldsmith was describing him when he said of the village preacher:

"As some tall cliff, that lifts its awful form,  
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

One is led to ask for the secret of all this, as even the casual observer asks for the secret of the palm's verdure and thrift. Situated as it often is close to, if not in the very midst of, a desert environment, why is it that the palm nevertheless finds nourishment and flourishes while its companions, the sage brush and cacti, like unthrifty peasants, eke from the soil a bare existence? Why is it that even in college and university circles we find a number of men, with equal advantages, pursuing the same courses of study, but one of them towers above the others as the palm above the cacti. The secret of the palm is the secret of the righteous man. They both have a secret fountain of nourishment whose source is unknown, or whose fullness remains untapped by their fellows. As the palm seeks the rim of the oasis, hugs the banks of the winding river, or

when found upon the desert, sends its roots down deep and taps the arteries of moisture below, so the good man keeps his life in touch with the Source of life.

No one can examine the worn and frayed Bible that J. W. T. McNiel used during his early life and fail to find the source and explanation of his superior character. In the Gospel of Matthew he has underlined Pilate's question, "What shall I do with Jesus which is called Christ?" Men have done many things with him. Some have ignored him; some have pretended to accept him and have presented to the world such a caricature of His face as to cause His name to become a hiss and a by-word. Mr. McNiel took this question seriously and answered it intelligently. Welcoming Christ as the light and inspiration of his life, he made Him attractive to others. Christianity's best advertisement is not upon paper but upon the hearts of her loyal subjects.

There is yet another thought contained in our text which should have attention. "The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." I suspect the Psalmist thought of the palm more as a shade tree, an ornament, than as a thing of utility. To him it represented the aesthetic quality of the good life; that about the good man which is pleasing to the eye and refreshing to the spirit. But it is not enough to be good; one should be good *for something*. So in describing the utility aspect of the good man's life he changes the parallelism a little and compares him to the cedar in Lebanon.

The forest of gigantic cedars upon picturesque Mount Lebanon was one of the marvels of the age. Not only do the Hebrew writers of that time mention them but reference is made to them by the Greek and Egyptian writers as well. They were both pleasing to the eye and also valuable as building material. From their tall trunks the palace of David and the temple of Solomon were constructed. The life of the good man is builded into the temple of his fellow-men. McNiel is dead only in the sense that Lebanon has been denuded of her beautiful forest. The trees became

the temple of Jehovah where they wrought themselves into the emotions, vows and conduct of the Hebrew people. They were transformed into poetry, psalm and prayer. So the life of our friend has been wrought, let us hope, into the temple of humanity. The impress he left upon many of us will be felt years to come. He numbered among his friends people of many beliefs. A young Hebrew in the University of Chicago was often dubbed a "Christian" because of his admiration for McNiel. A Catholic lady writes me expressing her admiration for him. Another friend, writing of the memorial services says, "May the Lord use these services to make more McNiels."

Rev. J. M. Linden, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Oregon City, Ore., writes: "I shall never forget his influence over me, especially when he was leader of the Evangelistic Band at the university. What sermons he preached during that campaign! His Lord stood out and McNiel was out of sight. I tell you, Woodruff, he changed the message for some of us as we listened to him."

Although he was only thirty-three years of age when he was called away, the influence that he left upon those who knew him forces me to believe that his life accomplished the purpose whereunto God had planned it. What he might have accomplished had he been spared no one can conjecture. But when my mind begins to brood over the brevity of his life I console myself with the words of Shelley, found in his lament over the untimely death of the young poet Keats:

"Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep  
He hath awakened from the dream of life—  
'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep  
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,  
And in mad trance, strike with our spirits knife  
In vulnerable nothings. *We* decay  
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief  
Convulse us and consume us day by day,  
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.



“He has outsoared the shadow of our night;  
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,  
And that unrest which men miscall delight,  
Can touch him not and torture not again;  
From the contagion of the world’s slow stain  
He is secure, and now can never mourn  
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;  
Nor, when the spirit’s self has ceased to burn,  
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.”

Dear boy, thou wert such a mixture of man, woman and child that we all loved thee, nor now love thee less. We say not, “Rest in peace,” for such a spirit as thine cannot rest, neither here nor there, but ever must it search for Truth, Beauty, Duty—God. Call to us out of those Mysterious Depths and teach us by our memory of thee so to blend the man, woman and child in us that our spirits may be even as thine.

We leave this flower upon thy new-made grave—tomorrow it shall wither—and turn us to our tasks, cheered by our memory of thee, and with a greater confidence in the Unseen, because thou art there.

## Memorial Service Held in Potomac, Va., Aug. 4, 1907

MR. MCNIEL'S FIRST PASTORATE.

*By Mrs. Annie E. Grigsby.*

The morning and afternoon services of the Baptist Church at Potomac, Va., on Sunday, August 4, were devoted to a memorial service in honor of him who for four and one-half years, January 1895-August 1899, was its pastor.

The sincere regard in which Mr. McNiel was held by the members of this church, was evidenced by the large attendance at both services.

His pastorate began while he was a student at Richmond College and was characterized by the faithfulness and devotion that made his comparatively brief life so full of useful and blessed service to his fellows.

The exercises were presided over by Deacon William J. Rogers, and were unusually interesting and appropriate.

Dr. Charles J. Ladson, of Washington, D. C., a devoted friend of Mr. McNiel's, made an address on "Mr. McNiel as a Man;" Mr. W. J. Rogers, "Mr. McNiel as a Minister," and Rev. H. H. Fones, pastor of the Hanover Baptist Church, "Mr. McNiel as an Evangelist."

A sermon appropriate to the occasion was preached by Rev. R. S. Monds, pastor of churches on the Eastern shore, who was a close friend of Mr. McNiel, both having been ordained to the ministry at the same time and with the same service.

The exercises were interspersed with beautiful music, favorite pieces of Mr. McNiel's, including a trio, "Far Away," by Dr. C. J. Ladson, Mrs. C. J. Ladson, of Washington, D. C., and Miss Louise Rogers, King George. A solo, "Jesus Lover of My Soul," by Miss E. Pearle Grigsby, of Washington, D. C.; solo, "Only a Dream," Dr. C. J. Ladson; a duet, "Forever With the Lord," by Misses E. Pearle and Mabel Grigsby; solos, "Cast Thy Bread upon



the Waters," and "Sometime We'll Understand," by Mrs. Daisy Coakley Staples, of Washington, D. C., and a solo, "One Sweetly Solemn Thought," by Mrs. Annie E. Grigsby, of Washington, D. C.

Resolutions adopted by the First Baptist Church of Albuquerque, N. M., of which Mr. McNiel was pastor at the time of his death, were read by Mrs. Grigsby, at the morning service, and resolutions were also presented and adopted, expressing the affectionate remembrance in which he is held by the members of The Potomac Baptist Church and the people of this community in general.

Mr. McNiel's four and one-half years of service made an abiding impression on the life of the Potomac church and it is perhaps more than a coincidence that this service in which the church testified her love for him, was followed by one of the most successful meetings in her history, thirty-four having been received by baptism and four by restoration; thus, "He being dead, yet speaketh."

Resolutions presented and adopted:

WHEREAS, On March 6, 1907, in Albuquerque, N. M., our beloved brother and former pastor, Rev. J. W. T. McNiel, was called to his reward in heaven; and

WHEREAS, For four and one-half years he so faithfully and efficiently served us as pastor and by his consecrated life, soul stirring sermons and genial companionship did so much to build up our church and community; and

WHEREAS, We wish to give some public expression to the feelings of our hearts; therefore be it

*Resolved*—1. That while we do not understand why one so young, so useful and promising should be taken away in the beginning of his work, yet we acknowledge with profound reverence the supremacy, wisdom and love of our God and meekly bow to His will; we are assured that there are wise purposes underlying this divine act and are comforted with the thought, that our loss is the blessed gain of our deceased friend;

*Resolved*—2. That in the death of Brother McNiel,

his family lose a loved one, of which they were justly proud and over whose silent grave they have cause to shed their tears; the cause of Christ in general loses a minister, who loved the message God gave him for a dying world and who, in every trust divinely committed, was ever true; he possessed strong faith in God, he was sincere in his devotions and ever ardent in his efforts to reach men's hearts and win them for his Lord; he was richly endowed for his work and in a very special sense was he fitted for evangelistic work in which he so greatly delighted and was wonderfully successful. While his active life was very short, covering as it did a period of not more than twelve years, yet scores of precious souls were led to the cross through his earnest work and many stars added to his heavenly crown; this church in particular keenly feels his loss, for it was here, the first and most of his service as a minister was rendered; we learned to love him for his work's sake as well as for his own; our hearts loved to nestle beside his loving heart; he led us all to higher ideals, loftier purposes and holier ambitions; his work in our midst will never die and his memory is enshrined in the hearts and minds of us all; heaven has an added charm, since he is there;

*Resolved—3.* That we do hereby extend our heartfelt sympathy to each and all of his dear relatives, with whom he was such a favorite and whose hearts are almost broken at the thought of his departure; we pledge to them our earnest prayer, that the God who filled the soul and life of their dear one with joy while he lived, may soothe their aching hearts as they pass through the shadows of earth's journey. May they be guarded and guided until the end and then rest with their precious loved ones beneath the shade of heaven's trees forever at home;

*Resolved—4.* That these resolutions be made a part of the records of The Potomac Baptist Church, a copy sent to the bereaved family of our brother and copies furnished The Religious Herald and The Free Lance for publication.

I am a stranger here, within a foreign land,  
My home is far away, upon a golden strand;  
Ambassador to be of realms beyond the sea,  
I'm here on business for my King.

This is the King's command, that all men ev'rywhere,  
Repent and turn away, from sin's seductive snare;  
That all who will obey, with Him shall reign for aye,  
And that's my business for my King.

My home is brighter far than Sharon's rosy plain,  
Eternal life and joy thro'out its vast domain;  
My sov'reign bids me tell how mortals there may dwell,  
And that's my business for my King.

This is the message that I bring,  
A message angels fair would sing;  
"Oh, be ye reconciled," thus saith my Lord and King,  
"Oh, be ye reconciled to God."

IX  
SERMONS

“Teach us the lesson of his life,  
The secret of his power  
To scatter light and sunshine  
When threat’ning storm-clouds lower ;  
To sympathize with sorrow’s tears,  
To greet with joy the glad,  
To carry hope to fainting hearts  
And comfort to the sad.”

## IX

### SERMONS

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#### Christians of Today Need the Courage of Paul

Text: Romans 1:8-17. Paul has about completed his work in the east, and consequently begins to turn his face toward the west. Being, in a peculiar sense, the apostle to the Gentiles, he desires to stand within the gates of Rome, the proud mistress of the world, and there preach the Gospel of the Son of God. But this desire could not be realized, for he must first go to Jerusalem to bear to the needy Christians there a contribution from the Gentile Christians of Galatia, Macedonia and Achaia, and thus bind together by bonds of love and gratitude the two great divisions of the church and avert a schism of the body of Christ. This trip to Jerusalem will necessitate a considerable delay in getting to Rome, for, even if he has a prosperous journey, he will consume considerable time in going from Corinth, where he now is, to Jerusalem and back to Rome. But, in the meantime, he wishes to assure his Roman brothers of his desire to come to them, and also to fortify their faith against the doctrine of the Judaizers, who may come at any time and lead them from the true faith. Therefore, Paul writes the epistle to the Romans, the very heart of which is a comprehensive description of righteousness apart from works of law and available through faith for both Jew and Gentile. But Paul does not purpose to make his letter a permanent substitute for a personal visit, for his heart is still set upon eventually preaching Christ to those also that are in Rome. This desire is shown by his attitude toward the brethren at Rome. He is thankful for the faith of the Roman Christians and prays that he may be prospered by the will of God to come unto them.

He doubtless felt keenly the trying circumstances under



which Christians were laboring in that wicked and idolatrous city. We labor today under such favorable circumstances that it is difficult for us to realize what suffering and what hardships and what self-sacrifices were involved in confessing the name of Jesus. They were confronted daily with trials and sufferings, and quite well did Paul know that those were times which tried the very souls of men. His heart, therefore, went out to them in sympathy and love, and he longed to see them and impart unto them some spiritual gift that they might be thoroughly grounded in the faith and be strengthened for the noble work of living and laboring for God.

Rome, moreover, was a strategic point. To establish the work in Rome meant much for the Gospel and for the world. As all roads led to Rome, so all roads led from Rome. To establish firmly the Gospel in Rome meant to send the message of salvation through every channel and avenue of the great empire, just as blood is sent out from the heart into every artery and vein of the human body.

But, in thinking of his going to Rome, the apostle's love flows even more freely when he touches upon his great obligation. First, he was to preach the Gospel to all men. "I am debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." God had given him a world-wide message of love, and he could not rest until he had, to the fullest measure of his ability, proclaimed it to all classes and conditions of men. Reflection upon this obligation warms his great heart, and defiance to all the satanic powers of wicked Rome flashed from his eyes as he thought of standing within her gates to discharge the duty that had been divinely laid upon him on that eventful day of his journey from Jerusalem to Damascus. He has come face to face with the world's Redeemer, and his theological system has been turned upside down. Instead of narrow, bigoted Pharisaism, he has a world-wide salvation to proclaim; instead of thinking of the Gentile as unworthy to be classed with the highly exalted Jew, he recognizes in him a brother. The great truth of the universal brother-

hood of man has been learned from the awful tragedy of Calvary, where Jesus tasted death for every man. He sees that there is now in the eyes of God no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him. He recognizes that the human soul is loved by Christ and should be sought by every faithful servant of God, regardless of the name it wears, the flesh that embodies it, or the nation that claims it. Paul has seen that the Son of Man rises above the parentage, the blood, the narrow horizon which bounded, as it seemed, His human life; He is the archetypal man in whose presence distinctions of race, intervals of ages, types of civilizations, degrees of mental culture, are as nothing. Paul's own soul had found in Jesus the healing fountain, the purifying water, the saving grace of God, and he was rejoicing in the exalted privilege of pointing earth's burdened and weary hearts to this everlasting remedy. He had been placed upon the walls of Zion as a sentinel to sound the signal of the approach of the enemy, and he would not prove recreant in the face of duty.

Even so, you and I, who, as we trust, have been saved by the grace of God, and have had committed to our keeping the message of life, are bound by all that is good and true and sacred to tell troubled hearts that there is peace; to tell the sin-sick soul that there is a Great Physician; to tell those who are in spiritual darkness that there is light; to tell those who are bound and imprisoned by sin that the Lord looseth the prisoners. Shall not our hearts fill with transporting joy and our feet quicken their steps as we hasten to meet our divinely-appointed obligation to men?

Are you ready to pay this debt? Paul was ready to respond to the call of duty. "So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you also that are in Rome." He was waiting and praying for the opportunity to lengthen the cords and strengthen the stakes. How is it with you? Are you ready for the command to march? If your country needed you today, you would be ready to march into the very jaws of death to save your flag from

disgrace and your native land from humiliation. But God calls us to a greater service than bearing arms in earthly combat. Our brothers are perishing in their sins, and the Divine voice comes to us, saying, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" The true heart and loyal sends back the response, "Here am I; send me."

"It may not be on the mountain's height,  
Or over the stormy sea;  
It may not be at the battle's front,  
My Lord will have need of me.  
But if, by a still, small voice He calls  
To paths I do not know,  
I'll answer, dear Lord, with my hand in Thine  
'I'll go where You want me to go.' "

Having declared his readiness to go, the apostle turns to the consideration of his great message. He is no sounding brass or tinkling cymbal, for he has a living, powerful message of Divine love that has come to him from the great compassionate heart of God, and has penetrated the deepest recesses of his soul. In this message he glories. When he says, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ," he does not mean only that he is not ashamed of the Gospel, for his chief delight and highest glory was in his message. His declaration here is, in its real significance, very similar to that of Gal. 6:14—"God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Christ was his message—Christ, who is the brightness of the glory and the express image of the Father—Christ, who bore our sins in His own body on the tree, who died like a god, rose triumphant over death, and returned to the Father, who "made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all

things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Such a Saviour is worthy of the adoration of every heart. The Greeks gloried in their strong and flexible language, which has been for ages the admiration of the human race; they gloried in their profound philosophy, which exhibits some of the most clear-sighted reasoning the world has ever produced; they gloried in their exquisitely beautiful paintings and sculpture, which perhaps may never be equaled. The Romans gloried in their imperial power in arms, their invincible Cæsars, their matchless city, the proud, defiant mistress of the world, with her spacious theatres, magnificent palaces, and temples gilded with pure gold. But all these, in the mind of Paul, became as nothing in the presence of God's greatest gift to men. We have a Saviour in whom we can glory. May no earth-born cloud dim our vision of God in Christ. When all earthly glory has faded as the autumn leaf in the silent grove, and earth has been rolled back as a scroll, Christ will still live and reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

"In the cross of Christ I glory,  
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;  
All the light of sacred story  
Gathers 'round its head sublime."

Paul saw also that his message was the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. You that have trusted your all to Jesus have found the truth that is spoken of here. You can testify to the power of the Gospel to save men from sin. You have many a time lifted your heart to God and exclaimed, "Oh, to grace how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be." You have doubtless thought how strange that Christ should take your sinful heart, purify it, and lift you into holy fellowship with the Father. It is because the Gospel is the power of God.

When Jesus began His ministry of love and mercy, the Jew was weighted down by rabbinical legislation. The



Greek philosophy had proved its own weakness in the presence of sin. It had no life for the dead heart, no comfort for the troubled soul, no power to forgive sin. The Romans were losing confidence in their gods. They did not find them "a very present help in time of need." These gods had no message for the sin-burdened soul. How different from all these was the message which Paul had for the Romans. "For the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword." If we are to save men, we must lay hold upon this powerful message and preach it to men. This message alone can bind up the broken-hearted, give liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. It is the power of Heaven come down to earth.

Again, Paul observed that in his message is revealed a righteousness of God from faith to faith. He declares it boldly: "For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith to faith." Then he quotes from the prophet Habakkuk, "as it is written, but the righteous shall live by faith." The word righteousness is used by Paul in this letter to mean God's way or plan of accepting men. Hence, he desires to come to the people with a message that reveals God's way of receiving men into holy fellowship with Himself.

What message could possibly be of greater moment? It is a message that stays man's heart upon God and transfers his affections from earth to heaven. It was the poet Blair, I think, who said:

"Some angel guide my pencil while I draw  
What nothing less than angel can exceed,  
A man on earth devoted to the skies."

But, mark you, this righteousness is revealed from faith to faith, or out of faith into faith. This means that the Christian life begins with faith to Christ; it is continued and strengthened by faith in Christ, and it is completed—gloriously completed—by faith in Christ.

## Character Must Be a Personal Achievement

Text: Matt. 25:9—"But the wise answered, saying: 'Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you; go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.'"

In this parable of the wise and foolish virgins, Jesus gives a dramatic story of an eastern wedding, with its sudden midnight cry, its sense of surprise, its shut door of opportunity. He vividly describes the bitter grief and the deep disappointment of those who had professed and long appeared to be His friends, now encountering the closed door and the solemn voice of refusal. He thus forcefully points out the supreme necessity of preparing for all moral crises. What Jesus tells to the ear by this impressive story, the sculptor Renaldi shows to the eye in his famous statue, "The Moment, One and Infinite." It is the moment of a great moral crisis. Browning calls it "the tick of one's lifetime." We stand amazed when we contemplate the power of critical moments to settle destinies of individuals and nations. This has been a favorite theme with the moralist and the student of human life. Such moments are turning points in human life and human history, and not infrequently are big with consequences. Failure to measure up to such emergencies shuts doors that sometimes can never be opened again. Lord Tennyson was contemplating this tragic fact of life, as taught in the story of the virgins, when he applied it to Queen Guinevere in her effort to reopen a closed door:

Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.

"Too late, *too late!* ye cannot enter now!"

No light had we; for that we do repent;  
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.

"Too late, *too late!* ye cannot enter now!"

No light; so late! and dark the night and chill;

O let us in, that we may find the light!

"Too late, *too late!* ye cannot enter now!"



Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?  
O let us in, though late, to kiss his feet!  
"No, no; *too late! ye cannot enter now.*"

Life is serious because tragic. We know not when the clock may strike the hour in which a single act may decide the future and happiness, the success or failure, of a whole life. Some things are done in critical hours that cannot be undone, and leaving undone things that ought to be done, frequently incurs irretrievable and irreparable loss. The trite maxim, "Strike while the iron is hot," is good advice if one strikes wisely. Strike at the opportune time. Do the right thing at the critical hour. It was a tremendously critical moment in the history of Rome when Julius Cæsar, the pro-consul of Gaul, took the law in his own hands and daringly crossed the little River Rubicon. His own destiny and that of his country hung upon that one event. Hence, as men have read of this turning point of his history, they have made him exclaim: "The enemy awaits me; the opportunity invites; the die is cast."

But for one's weal or woe, one's fortune or misfortune, to hinge on the action of a single hour, does not seem just; indeed, it would not be just. All we have said is true only when rightly understood. Critical hours determine one's future only in the sense that they reveal one's character. They are the revelation of all that has gone before and of the character that has been formed in previous years. Therefore, the determining factors of life are not, after all, the crises, but rather is it true that the less striking and perhaps unobserved moments and events of life decide one's fate and fortune forever. The critical moment in the life of the foolish virgin, as seen in the parable, did not change her condition, but only revealed it. The sudden midnight cry, "Behold the bridegroom!" took nothing from her and decided nothing for her, except what was already decided by her previous life, but it did bring out in bold relief the awful fact that she had nothing—no oil, no character! Her previous life had made this moment and this revela-

tion inevitable. She followed the wrong path, and as a matter of course reached the wrong destination. How hard it is for us to realize, beyond all doubt, the simple truth that whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap!

In times of peace we prepare for war. In ordinary and normal life we prepare to meet extraordinary and abnormal times. The tree will stand the test of the storm, provided in former and calmer days it has struck its roots deeply into the soil and thus gained strength for the testing time. To the thoughtless and careless the critical hour may seem harsh in its dealing with men, but it is never unjust. It never makes nor unmakes any man; it only reveals what the man has been making himself during his previous years. This is what Wellington meant when he said that the battle of Waterloo was won on the cricket field at Eton. It is an inescapable law of the moral and spiritual world that the unworthy are by their own act excluded from the highest achievements when life's greatest moments come. Some one has wisely said: "Man's whole life and training is just to fit him to do the right thing at the critical moment. He who fails at this juncture fails not because he, by mere accident, took the wrong path or made a bad guess, or lost his stake; he fails because he has not so ordered his previous life that he might instinctively do the right thing at a push." The apparently good man falls with a crash, and his friends are amazed that such a man should fall before the forces of evil. But if all the facts of the case were known, they would perhaps see that secretly the foundation has been slipping away for a long time, and the collapse made inevitable by his previous life. Another man makes a powerful stroke and suddenly becomes a hero, but the energy and force for the hour have been accumulating for many years. Man's whole life and training is just to fit him, or unfit him, to do the right thing at the critical moment. The well-ordered life instinctively takes the right course at the right time.

But the great and impressive point of the story of the virgins—the point that our peerless Teacher would write

indelibly upon our souls—is that character is a personal achievement and is by no means transferable. Immanuel Kant, when discussing the metaphysics of morality, gave expression to a world of truth when he said: “Nothing in the world, or even outside of the world, can possibly be regarded as good without limitation except a good will.” Kant, furthermore, rightly identifies will with what we call character. And just as the directing will of any given individual is personal and untransferable, so it is with his character. We may give others our money, our sympathy, our love, and a thousand other things, but in no way can we transfer our character to other persons. This is one of man’s possessions that must always and everywhere be personally acquired. We may help the unfortunate and fallen to reform; we may point men to a better life; we may urge the wicked and godless to correct their way; but every step toward moral reform and a good character must be made by the individual himself whose betterment we seek. You cannot take of your character and confer any fractional part of it upon the characterless. Character is a jewel that cannot be had for love or money. It is not on the market. If you would have character, then, you must cultivate it for yourself in the garden of your own heart. Because the virgin thought she might draw on the resources of her sister, Jesus calls her foolish. I do not doubt but that the wise virgin desired to help her foolish sister, but it was impossible to grant the request, “Give us of your oil.” Renaldi’s beautiful group, which has been already referred to, represents the foolish virgin making a pathetic entreaty for a part of the good supply of oil possessed by the wise virgin, while the latter lifts her hand as if to guard her treasure, and has upon her face a look of deep sadness as she refuses her sister’s request.

A New England essayist, commenting on this scene, said, “She should have given her the oil.” So would you and I say, did we not remember that in both the parable and the statue the subject is character, and character is not transferable. We may work for others, think for others,

and pray for others, but we cannot be good for others. If, then, you would possess this pearl of great price—a character, pure and beautiful—you must obtain it by your own seeking and by your own endeavor. It is not the gift of heredity, nor of environment, nor of both combined, but it is the flower that can grow and blossom only within the sacred precincts of the individual soul. When it blossoms in beauty and loveliness, it sheds its fragrance everywhere, yet its seat of empire is within, and not without. Hence, we are told, “Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” But I have not told you the whole truth, and lest I should be misunderstood and you go away depressed instead of encouraged, I must try to make plain the further fact that while the good man cannot give you of his oil, he can, in many ways, help you to get oil for yourself. Therefore, while character is solely and supremely a personal achievement, you need not wage the fight against the forces of evil simply in your own strength and all alone; for good men everywhere extend a helping hand and offer you their prayers, their sympathy, and their co-operation in the noble endeavor to move onward and upward into the divine likeness. We move forward with more stately tread and with greater hope of victory when we move together. Co-operation is as replete with significance in the moral as in the commercial or political world. And as one who has faith in mankind, I am glad to be able to vouchsafe to every earnest, struggling soul the most cordial co-operation of those who stand for the best in life and who aspire to rise above all that is unworthy of the noblest and truest man. No, you need not stand alone. A mighty host, who themselves are bearing arms in the mighty combat with evil, invite you to stand firmly and bravely with them in their united endeavor to gain supremacy over all of earth’s satanic powers. This is an engagement of tremendous magnitude, and you can no more afford to stand aloof from the best influences and forces of life than you can afford to be crushed to earth and destroyed forever by agents of evil and soulless vam-



pires. But you do not have to stand alone. All who are worthy of your respectful consideration will help you in the task of shaping your life and moulding your character after the highest ideal. And, better still, you will receive help from our good, compassionate heavenly Father, who "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." In the dying words of our great teacher, President Harper, of the University of Chicago, we have this noble testimony: "God helps, God always helps." Would that these words might be emblazoned in large letters across the sky, so that whoever looks upward from earth's sins and sorrows might learn that in our search for goodness and for God, we might hear, "God helps, God always helps." God speed you on and give you victory.



## True Greatness as Shown in the Life of Jesus

Text: Matthew 12:42—"Behold, a Greater than Solomon is Here."

Every one who thinks at all has some standard of greatness, and by that standard seeks more or less consciously to fashion his own life. The higher the standard, the better the life. How unfortunate that so many of our capable young people are satisfied with low ideals. In our great universities there can be found hundreds of young men whose hero is the college athlete and whose highest ambition is to excel in muscular strength and physical endurance. Others, however, find their ideal in the successful student, and their ambition is to be scholarly, cultured, and well equipped for life's arduous duties and important responsibilities. In nearly every walk of life there are found those whose recognized standard of greatness consists of making the most elaborate display of material possessions. These always vote the richest man the greatest, for they estimate a man's worth to the world by what he has rather than what he is. In the minds of others the consummation of all greatness is to pass freely as a "society" man or woman, and hence they lend every energy to this one end, thinking they will have reached the pinnacle of all human glory and human achievement when once they can look down from their lofty height upon earth's common hordes who are weak-minded enough to give some attention to other things. But, fortunately for the human race, those who possess these low ideals are not the controlling factors in making human history and in fixing human destinies, for the predominating influences of today emanate from better hearts and saner minds. Men who move the world in its upward progress are those whose standard of greatness is based on moral worth. He who has something with which to ennoble human life is welcomed by the worthy and pronounced great by those who are capable of judging. The man who is universally accounted the world's greatest benefactor possessed absolutely nothing but

moral and spiritual worth. "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." And yet the human race knows no one that could be brought even afar off into comparison with Jesus, and it was He who taught us, saying, "Let him who would become great among you become servant of all."

If human greatness is to be measured by personal service and moral worth, then we go wrong when we condition one's greatness on parentage. The parents of Jesus are known to us only because of the greatness of their Son. It is not just to ostracize any child because of the sins of his parents; neither is it fair to discriminate in favor of the well-born. Let every one stand or fall on his own merits. Many a criminal has been shielded from the punishment of the law simply because he belonged to a good family, while if his people had been unknown he would have received punishment to the full extent of the law. Our false standards of life license certain classes to revel in criminality with impunity. But we are fast approaching the day when we shall not feel ready to estimate the worth of a given individual when we have carefully sought out the history of his ancestors, for we have already learned that some of the most worthless wretches that tread the earth are sons and daughters of noble parents. We know, too, that history's greatest names have sprung into fame regardless of ancestry. People, like trees, do not start great, but grow great. True greatness belongs to the soul that presses to the front independently of mere circumstance. Time was when worthless souls could subsist on their family names, but conditions have changed, and he who leans today upon the ancestral tree and waits in ease and slothfulness for fame and fortune, will inevitably receive his just reward.

Furthermore, Jesus was unmoved by outward trappings which the world loves to worship. His was an humble entrance into the world, not marked by pomp and splendor such as earthly kings rejoiced in. No room in the inn,

He rests in the manger and is worshiped there. May the time hasten when our judgments shall be just, our ideals true, our valuations fair, for then, and only then, shall we recognize true greatness wherever it may exist, and be prepared to give honor to whom honor is due. Well do you know, my friends, that many a great soul today is hid under tattered and torn garments. Many of you who hear me today may not discover their virtues, but God knows their worth and makes them His own. You remember the poet's song:

“Full many a gem of purest ray serene  
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.”

As a few little clouds may hide from our vision the brightness and beauty of the midnight stars, so it may happen that an inexpensive robe may hide from the world's view that beautiful and stately soul whom to know is to wonder that so much loveliness and worth could take on mortal shape. He who measures greatness and worth by outward show and material things proves his own soul to be blind and covetous, and thereby reveals a littleness that ought to be despised and a meanness of thought that mars the beauty and blights the flower of our civilization. No one advocates more emphatically than I the sacred obligation of every one to make faithful and honest endeavor to provide well for temporal needs, but I do say that he who becomes a miser and gathers and uses wealth for selfish ends, whether that wealth assume the form of money or of mental training and intellectual culture, becomes an object to be despised and spurned and cursed. What the world most needs today is not money to buy bread, but a powerful moral and spiritual uplift to make better men and women. When our characters become conformed to the Divine likeness, the world will not cry for bread nor shiver in the cold. If He who made the greatest gift and

did most for the betterment of mankind had not where to lay His head, then our usefulness in the world is not conditioned on material things, but rather on greatness of soul and beauty of character. You yourselves may know of men who possess thousands in silver and gold, while in reality they are not worth to the world their room in the pauper's cemetery. Material wealth is a great blessing when wisely used, but even then it is not the only blessing worthy of our honest seeking. Poverty is no virtue and is no guarantee of a passport to glory, and surely no one could be foolish enough to advocate poverty for poverty's sake. My only contention is that neither poverty nor wealth conditions one's usefulness to the world, nor is either a just basis on which to estimate one's true worth to mankind.

Jesus' worth lay in His moral and spiritual worth, His inner life, His character, and out of this sprang His deeds of universal and lasting blessing. He was great in moral courage. He dared to do His duty, to speak the truth, commending the right, condemning the wrong. Although the path of duty and truth led by way of Gethsemane and Calvary, He nevertheless walked it with stately tread and unfaltering courage. From His baptism to His death He never once courted the favor of evil or proved recreant in the face of duty. What man among you can compromise with sin without losing self-respect? The consciousness of manhood must be maintained at all hazards, and you who cavil at the truth and tamper with moral values will soon count yourselves moral imbeciles and spiritual parasites.

The highest type of courage is moral courage. Many a man who would stake his life in deadly combat in defense of home and country would prove a coward in a moral crisis. Many a man who would give his life for his country's liberty would not lift his hand to free his native land and protect his home from the curse of vice and the enslaving forces of evil. Our need today is not physical courage to keep the other man from encroaching upon our rights. We are abundantly blessed with that. We need



rather that courage which will impel us always to stand for the right and to do the right, a courage which will inspire us to welcome righteousness and truth in every vocation of life. The business man who will deliberately lie to make a dollar will sell his character for the same price. He may prize ever so much his reputation, but he has no regard for his character. You put a price upon your own soul when you decide to do wrong for material gain. The world needs more men of stalwart character and great moral courage. Jefferson Davis saved the day at Buena Vista as his clarion voice rang out above the din of battle: "Steady, Mississippians, steady. Cowards to the rear, but brave men to the front!" In the struggle for moral achievement and moral victories let the cry go forth in thundering tones, "Cowards to the rear, but brave men to the front."

Another element in the greatness of Jesus' moral and spiritual life lay in the fact that He saw things in their true relation, knew how to value each, and therefore made the kingdom of God first all the time. He knew the value of things temporal, and the value of things eternal. The relative value of each He states in the solemn question, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" This is an infinite valuation placed upon the human life or soul. The fatal error of many lies in the fact that they put the emphasis, the supreme valuation, on the wrong side of life. When I assert that things of eternal worth ought to be seriously considered by every thoughtful person, I am not dealing with pious platitudes and statements that ought to be made by the minister just as a matter of course. I mean that sooner or later you will be compelled to face this question, and far better that you begin right and act today the part of a sensible man. It is hard to understand why an intelligent being will struggle almost day and night for the accumulation of things which must pass away in a few fleeting days, and give scarcely a thought to the building of character and the culture of the soul—possessions that abide



when all things temporal have passed from us forever. May God give us true valuations, high ideals and eternal possessions.

Notice also that Jesus trusted God fully and was in perfect harmony with the Divine plan. If we understand God's purpose regarding the human race, it is to lead men into that same perfection of manhood and self-mastery which was so clearly manifested in the person of Jesus. To be great, we must fall in line with this plan and make our contribution, be it ever so small, to the betterment of mankind. Harmony with the Divine will and co-operation in the Divine plan is the keynote to the truest and highest success. This requires you to become the servant of all, but it is the highest service man is capable of rendering. By giving yourselves diligently to this most royal task, you will save the life that now is and the life that is to come. Its requirements are great, but its rewards are greater.

Through His true life and heroic death, Jesus has become the world's greatest benefactor. He has become the King of countless lives, and is fast forging His way from the manger in Bethlehem to universal dominion when He shall be crowned King of Kings and Lord of Lords. If you would be great, follow Him through sacrifice and service, and He will bring you at last to share His triumph and His glory.

## Faith Alone Can Bring Knowledge of the Almighty

Text: John 14:9—"Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?"

Philip's request, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us," was evoked by Jesus' words, "From henceforth ye know him and have seen him."

That Jesus was the revelation of the Father, was the one foremost truth of His life. The consciousness of this fact had grown with His growth, and it had been the one proclamation of His ministry. So intense and so vivid was this truth to Him that He thought the blind and deaf in heart might see and hear it. And now one of his hearers asks a question which suddenly makes Him feel that what is to him as clear and bright as the sun in heaven is not perceived at all. What wonder, then, that we hear in His question a note of sorrowful surprise, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip?" Philip desired some physical manifestation of the Divine glory, so that every doubt might be forever expelled. He sought some such scene as the transfiguration on the mount, when before Peter, James and John, our Lord robed Himself in splendor, his raiment bright as the light, and His face shining as the sun. But Jesus thought His disciples might discover His significance without any such extraordinary experience, so He declares, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Philip had enjoyed splendid opportunities for finding in Christ the revelation of God; otherwise Jesus could not have propounded this question of sorrowful surprise. Philip's association with Jesus was enough to lead the Divine Teacher to expect more of His disciple. On many occasions it had doubtless been his privilege to witness the transforming and magic touch of Jesus as a miracle-worker. At His command, souls were released from the dominion of demons, disease gave place to health, and cold death yielded to the warm pulsations of full and vigorous life. This wonder-worker was

also the most profound and heart-searching Teacher known to human history. It was no mean privilege to sit at His feet and feast the soul on such words as fell from His lips. They were words sweeter than honey, radiant with light and instinct with life. The world knows no one whose grasp of truth and comprehension of life can be brought even afar off in comparison with Jesus. The Greeks were acknowledged masters in art, literature and philosophy. The whole of philosophy is virtually contained in the works of four or five Greek authors. Other men have explained and illustrated, but have added next to nothing. Emerson says that only a very few people are capable of understanding Plato. Yet, when brought into comparison with Jesus, the greatness of such sages and philosophers as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle grows dim, like stars before the brightness of the sun. Jesus was like one standing on a high peak, reporting of the sunrise to men in the dark valley. They heard His words, but they saw also upon His countenance the glow of dawn, and dazzling all about Him the incommunicable splendors of a new day. He was and still is the Light of the World, and to Him the wisest turn for guidance in solving the problems of life.

And we must remember, too, that Jesus was not only Teacher, but Saviour as well. For, after all, the greatest need of mankind is not for more light, but for more power; not for knowledge to discern between good and evil, but for deliverance from sin. Jesus not only teaches the right way, but gives grace to walk therein. Human nature needs something more than enlightenment; the illumination of the horrible pit is not enough to effect a rescue. Buddha and Socrates could reveal the distressed condition of humanity, but they could not stretch out the arm which alone could bring Satan's victim out and set him upon the rock. Jesus not only gives a correct philosophy of life, but, what is more important, He gives life itself. The soul dead in trespasses and sin has its sorest need unsatisfied until it has received the vitalizing touch of Him whose greatest title is "Savior of the World." Such was the Man with

whom Philip had communed in the quiet of the day and stillness of the night.

After all this, why did not Philip know Jesus? The explanation is probably found in the fact that the light was shut out by preconceived ideas regarding the Messiah. The shutters of the windows of his soul were closed—the darkness shut in, the light shut out. If we would find the real Christ, and in Him the revelation of God, we must approach Him without the blinding trammels of preconceived and warped ideas.

To know God is to have eternal life. Then let us consider for a moment the important question as to how we may know Him. If I may first answer negatively, I would say that this knowledge of God, which issues in eternal life, is not to be found in the study of Nature. To be sure, God is in His world, and he who already knows Him may find Him everywhere.

Every blooming flower, every rippling stream, every twinkling star, tells us that God is in His world, but it is only the believing heart that can interpret Nature's message and read in her beauty and perfection the glory of the Almighty. It is not the eye of the astronomer, but the eye of faith that sees God through the telescope. Our discovery of God is not made by aesthetic, geological or astronomical research, but after we have found Him some other where, all nature proclaims His presence and His praise—the stars "singing as they shine the hand that made us is divine."

And what we say of nature is true of all science. You cannot make your chemical analysis and say, "Therefore God is." No science can ever say, "I have found beyond all question the living God," for religious certitude is not the product of scientific investigation. It is the fruit of another field, the flower of another garden. Yet every law of science is the law of God, and God is in all true science as verily as He is in all true religion. Therefore, science could not be despised. It is only the dilettante who fears that science will take away his Lord. Such knowledge



can neither give nor take away the God whom to know aright is life eternal.

We may go a step further and say that God is not found solely in the words of eternal truth. You may read the Scriptures all your life and listen attentively to a thousand Gospel sermons, and then not know Him. Had not Philip sat at the Master's feet and heard such words as mortal lips never before had uttered? And still Jesus says to him, "Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me?" That God was in the ministry of His Son, no one of us would doubt; but we may hear wonderful words of life and witness deeds of mighty power, and not be brought thereby into a holy fellowship with God. We cannot know Him simply through these things. The beauties of nature are aesthetic—we admire. Science is intellectualistic—we reason. Miracle is wonderful—we stand amazed. But we may admire, we may reason, and we may stand in awe before the deepest mysteries of God, without ever being able to feel and to exclaim with the great Augustine, "Oh, God! Our souls are made for Thee, and our hearts will be restless until they rest in Thee."

What we want is God, and my contention is that a revelation of Him can be appropriated only through religious faith. We do not need so much a theory about God, but communion with Him—our heart meeting with His heart, our wills lost in His will. We seek not a sovereign seated far away upon a distant throne, surveying with majesty the subjects of his rule, but we seek Him who is nearer to us than our own breathing; whose throne is the human heart, and in whom we live and move and have our being. To know Him is not to have a well-formulated, logical theory about Him, but to be in conscious communion with Him as the Lord of your life. This, it seems to me, is effected by two steps. First, by being associated with Jesus, who is the supreme revelation of God; and, secondly, by surrendering your whole life to the Lordship of the Redeemer. We associate with Jesus by



following Him in His life and ministry as portrayed in the Gospel stories. We listen to His words, we behold His deeds, and we are swayed by His powerful personality. When brought close to Him, we confess with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." The inner spirit of Christ masters us and calls out our confident faith and our eager submission. But this association is effected also, and perhaps more largely, by contact with true Christians who reflect and reproduce in their life the life of Jesus. Many a time have you been in the presence of some sainted soul in whom you recognized a ruling power that you yourself did not possess. He who lives a distorted life cannot thus influence you, but the man who is true to the principles of the Christian religion, and who allows the spirit of Christ to be the ruling passion of his soul, does bring Christ before you in such a light that you must see Him, whether you wish to or not. Divine revelation appeals to the will of man, and God is found only when the will surrenders to that revelation. This surrendering and yielding of one's self to the will of God is the exercise of that Christian faith which brings to the soul of man a vivid and blessed consciousness of God, and establishes between the soul and the Infinite a divine fellowship. He seeks in vain who seeks to know God independently of doing His will; but he who seeks aright will surely find, and, in his finding, will be blessed forevermore. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in and sup with him and he with me."

## Public Opinion

Text, Matthew 11:18, 19: "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a demon. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners."

When John the Baptist appeared to Israel and made his voice heard from the wilderness, the stern reality of his life struck all imaginations. His proclamation of a Deliverer who should at once subdue all hearts and lift off the weight of sin, stirred men with the hope of peace, and all classes streamed into the desert to hear his message. But only a few remained; the rest streamed back again, untouched and unmoved by the fiery words of the fearless prophet, who, conscious of his unique mission, was unsparing in his denunciation of sin.

The voice of John rang out the old and rang in the new. He stood upon the line that divided two great religious epochs. Israel had waited long for their deliverer, and now, at last, this greatest of the prophets points to the long-looked-for Messiah, the Galilean stranger, and says, "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world." You would suppose that never since the flaming sword of the sentinel angel guarded entrance to the forbidden Eden, did men so overflow with joy and strike such full notes of praise. But how different in reality! Instead of hailing their king with shouts of hosannas, they begin to point out petty faults. They say John must be deranged! They reject his witness to Jesus and ridicule his mode of life, declaring him to be possessed of a demon, because he came neither eating nor drinking. On the other hand, Jesus lived among men, eating and drinking as they did. He went to the homes of Pharisee and publican, of scrupulous observers of the law and open transgressors of it, and shared their customary food and drink, and immediately they cried, "Behold a gluttonous man, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." Because he ate pleasant food like others,

with no special abstemiousness, they called him a glutton. Because he sometimes drank wine as others did, he was a winebibber. Because he treated bad men with civility and kindness, earnestly seeking to do them good, he himself also was bad. So they talked. John was not enough like other people—a crazy sort of a man. Jesus was too much like other people. Poor souls; nothing could please them.

Public opinion, in this instance, was glaringly inconsistent and grossly unjust. It was based on externals, such as food and dress, and therefore was a very superficial thing. There was pure gold beneath the surface, but the multitudes were too stupid and self-satisfied to give more than a casual glance. They were, like many of today, in a frame of mind to strain at a gnat and swallow a camel, and this they did without ever suspecting that any blame could thereby be laid at their own door. Little did they dream they were condemning a man who in after years would be called the world's chief friend and benefactor, and who would receive, after they themselves were long forgotten, the highest tributes of praise the human heart is capable of bestowing. Many a great soul has espoused the cause of truth, only to meet with persecutions and finally death at the hands of his own generation, and wait for other times to justify his stand and other hearts to sing his praise. But "wisdom is justified by her works," and though public approval is sometimes centuries behind heroes and martyrs, yet the hour of vindication comes and truth triumphs in the end.

On February 17, 1900, Rome witnessed a concourse of men such as the great city on the Tiber has rarely ever seen. But this time the crowd had not gathered to greet a triumphant Caesar at the head of his victorious legions, for they came from the ends of the earth to unveil a monument in memory of a poor wandering knight of the spirit who three centuries before on the same spot, had closed his tumultuous and checkered life on a pile of faggots. And why did this man, Giordano Bruno, suffer martyrdom at the hands of his countrymen? Because he lived three hun-

dred years in advance of the multitudes and taught the modern conception of the boundlessness of the world. It was eminently fitting that the nineteenth century, just before closing its doors, should think that it must pay this man a homage so pure and so enthusiastic. There was prophecy as well as courage in the bold words Bruno flung in the face of his judges, "You pronounce the sentence with greater fear than I receive it, perhaps." But after all, such bravery is not so rare; it fills the breasts of countless men and women whose crosses and pyres the history of the world passes by without even naming their names.

Men fall into two great classes, the fossilized and the progressive, and between these two classes the conflict rages. New ideas are costly things to cherish and espouse, for they require sacrifice and suffering. To champion the new means a battle with those who are intrenched in the old ideas, and whose varied interests are bound up in them. It means enemies who are heartless and cruel—enemies who confess great devotion to the Christ who was crucified by the same spirit they manifest, because he dared to introduce revolutionary ideas into the world. Everyone knows how Galileo was treated by devout ecclesiastics of his day, whose minds were fixed in error's chains and shut against the light. But this is the story of all human advance in all ages. Today the progressive man is not tied to the stake and his body burned to ashes, for the civil law does not allow that, but what is even worse, he is persecuted, villified and hounded to a slow and agonizing death. Those who proclaim loudest, "Give us religious liberty or give us death," are frequently among the first to stab the heart of a brother whose theological opinions do not exactly coincide with their own. One example out of many that might be cited will suffice. In 1902, Professor — made some unusual assertions about miracles, and immediately his beloved brethren were literally up in arms. The papers gave extensive accounts of the meeting, in which one of the oldest saints in the Rock River conference, gave vent to the severest vituperation and the most fiery denunciation of his straying brother. With one



hand uplifted and a voice trembling with emotion the patriarch minister passionately arraigned the brother of his faith, and forgetting the grace that forgave his own sins, exclaimed, "He ought to be skinned and his hide hung upon the barn door and salted." This is but the rage of the unthinking multitudes who have kindled the fires through which heroes and martyrs have had to pass in order to lead humanity onward and upward towards the boons of freedom, light and life.

Public opinion is vacillating and hence not a safe guide for the seeker after truth. Nearly all advance in religious knowledge, from the days of the first prophets of Israel to the time of modern biblical criticism, has been made through the crosses and fires of heartless persecution. Had moral and religious reformers guided their endeavors by the pulse of public sentiment, we would have simply marked time, with practically no progress, through all these centuries. But, thank God, men were brave enough to die for their convictions and let their death stand as the harbinger of better days. Heroes have been willing to perform their tasks in the light of their own conscience and wait for future generations to rise up and call them blessed. Men of towering strength and great moral courage have stemmed the tide of adverse public opinion, remembering that the multitudes will praise you today and tomorrow clamor for your death. No one knew the vacillation of the public mind better than the Man of Nazareth. Today they cry, "Behold, a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners," and tomorrow they come to him from every quarter to receive the blessings of his ministry. Now they hang upon his words and seem to appropriate his message, but soon he offends some over-scrupulous Pharisee and they seek to stone him to death. Now he rides into Jerusalem, the Holy City, amid shouts of hosannas and long live the King; but a few days later the same enthusiastic mob cried aloud, "Away with him! Crucify him!" And they led him away to a little hill, lone and gray, and there they crucified him of whom the great historian Rauke, said: "More guilt-



less and more powerful, more exalted and more holy has naught ever been on earth than his conduct, his life and his death." No wonder, then, that this man, who knew human nature as no other man knew it, said to his disciples: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves; be ye therefore as wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you; yea and before governors and kings shall ye be brought for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the Gentiles."

But I would not have you brethren think me a pessimist with no faith in human kind. On the contrary, I believe in the ultimate integrity of the human race, and I believe that when men and women are brought to see the truth and feel their obligation, they will take up their tasks with hearts brave and true. Therefore, public opinion is always tremendously powerful for good, when in the right. Great reforms are wrought at the command of public sentiment. To-day many men in high places, who are vested with authority, dare to lift their hand in enforcement of law and in defense of righteousness. One of the most propitious signs of the times is the recent and present crusades against public graft and unholy impositions upon the people, along with the facts that the men leading in these reforms have the approval and backing of the general public. A better day is coming. The people are going to rise up in their sovereignty and demand that justice, truth and righteousness be enthroned to do their perfect work. This day will not come, however, until the public mind is still better educated and trained on these vital issues. Therefore it behooves every right thinking man and woman, every educational institution, the public press and the pulpit to bend every energy to enlist the sympathy and support of the masses in stamping out crime and ushering in a better day.

But however powerful public sentiment may be, it cannot eventually triumph over truth.

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again,  
'Th' eternal years of God are hers."

John the Baptist suffered a ghastly death at the hands of a cruel foe, but the truth he proclaimed still lives and moves on to final victory. Jesus was taken by the midnight mob, tried, condemned and crucified by those who made an impious tool of law and a mockery of justice, nevertheless his kingdom moves on to universal dominion with the stateliness and majesty of the sun in his unhindered journey across the sky. All the combined forces of persecution and instruments of torture could not put out the light that emanates from the life of Socrates. Cicero paid him a just tribute when he said, "Socrates called philosophy down from the heavens to earth, and introduced it into the cities and houses of men, compelling men to inquire concerning life and morals and things good and evil." Nevertheless his countrymen thought him better dead than alive. He drank the cup of poison in his prison, surrounded by his disciples and friends, with perfect steadfastness and tranquility of soul, full of assurance that the death which was to attest his fidelity to his convictions would be most advantageous for him and his work.

Truth is eternal. This is the ultimate ground of our optimism. The right will prevail, because God lives and rules. In the beginning of his ministry Jesus faced three great discouragements, the doubting of John, adverse public opinion, and the hardness of the cities; but in spite of it all he was still optimistic, and said: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes." So let us look up and hope, believe and pray, until the day dawns and the light of eternal glory floods our souls.

## A Plea for a Larger Place for the Church in Our Hearts

Text, Jeremiah 51:50: "Remember Jehovah from afar, and let Jerusalem come into your mind."

Subject: "A Plea for a Larger Place for the Church in Our Hearts."

"Jeremiah stood at the threshold of the Babylonian captivity, and sounded in unmistakable terms the warning to his fellowmen. He saw that unless a thorough repentance came over the Israelites, and that very soon, the nation must fall, and Jerusalem must be laid waste by the enemy. Israel must repent or suffer, and since there was scarcely any hope of repentance, suffering was practically inevitable. The aged prophet studies the situation, sees with prophetic vision the holy city made desolate, and his brethren pining under the torturing yoke of heathen rule. He looks still further and sees that spoilers shall come from the north, and that Babylon herself shall fall. It is then that he makes this strong and pathetic appeal to his brethren: "Ye that have escaped the sword, go ye, stand not still; remember Jehovah from afar, and let Jerusalem come into your mind." Though far away, remember your own native land, which you "have loved and lost awhile." In the midst of false and strange gods, remember the God of Israel, in the midst of heathen cities in which men serve images made by their own hands, remember Jerusalem, the holy city, where you have so often met and worshipped the God of Jacob.

Jerusalem was to the faithful Jew what the Church of Christ is to the Christian. Therefore, Jeremiah's appeal to his brethren can be echoed as an appeal to every true follower of Christ to let the church come into his mind and heart, and occupy therein her merited place. We purpose to make this plea by setting forth, first, the real value of the church; and, secondly, by showing the just claims she has upon men.

By "the church" we mean, in this discourse, the great

brotherhood of believers in Christ. The value of this brotherhood is shown in part by the incalculable cost of our redemption. The church is not the product of human scheming and sacrifice; it does not represent a certain expenditure of money, nor does it represent only a certain number of years of human toil and suffering, the value of which might be computed, if only we had the data upon which to base the calculation. It is of divine origin, and the product of divine planning and divine execution. The execution of these plans involved the sufferings of a life of hardships, and the tortures of a humiliating and agonizing death. Man's best and greatest Friend was scorned, spat upon, crowned and robed in mockery, nailed by ruthless hands to the cruel tree, in order that we might be saved from our sins. No matter what may be your theory of the atonement, the facts of the awful tragedy remain as a testimony to the incalculable cost of the church of Jesus Christ. The Son of God did not die for naught. His death has a profound meaning, and until we can fathom the depth of these agonies and comprehend the boundless love of God, we shall stand in amazement before the ransom price of the church.

The value of the church is further shown by the fact that for nearly twenty centuries she has had the faithful service of the truest and best of men. Just as on the gory battle-field thousands of brave men have shown their loyalty and love for home and country, so at the burning stake, in positions of honor and of abasement, in riches and in poverty, in health and in sickness, in life and in death, men have shown undying loyalty to the cause of Christ. Many brave hearts have been pierced that a land of the noble and the free might become the heritage of sons and daughters. For this reason, if for no other, we would give our native land a large place in our hearts. The Kingdom of God has been purchased for us not only by the offering of the Spotless Lamb of God, as a sacrifice for our sins, but unnumbered loyal and noble lives have been sacrificed that truth might



live, and the church of God become the blessed heritage of many generations.

That the church is of inestimable value is demonstrated also by the fact that we who are followers of Christ and have received the "inheritance among all them that are sanctified," have been saved by her sacred influence and faithful labors. We owe our salvation to the church. The sacrificing love of Christian people, as they have been led and inspired by the Spirit of our Master, has led us to the divine Redeemer. Were it not for the church, to whose keeping have been committed the oracles of God, we should now be "without hope and without God in the world." She told us of our disease and pointed us to the remedy. She found us in darkness and led us into the light. She found us sorely oppressed by sin, and pointed us to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

When we have grown into manhood we can appreciate the true value of father and mother; we can then see how tender the care and how many the labors they bestowed upon us in order to bring us up in the right way. We honor and value them for what they have done for us. So the church has brought us life, joy, peace—all the blessings that come through redeeming grace. God bless the church, which he has appointed to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth.

The value of the church becomes even more apparent when we remember that through her the world is to be saved. What a tremendous mission! If she is to be valued by this world-wide and vastly important mission, surely nothing else can be of half so much worth to the world. Thousands and millions of souls are lost, and must be brought to God through the instrumentality of Christian people. Philosophy, science, culture, riches, are all powerless in the presence of sin. The task of the church can be accomplished only by the church, and this work surpasses all else in importance. Consequently she merits a large place in every heart, and we should prize her above all else we possess. The millions of the lost, the vastness of



the work, the awfulness of living and dying in sin, and the eternal verities of salvation through Christ, demand that we love the church and give her the best and chief place in our hearts. Therefore, my brethren, we plead with you, that in your homes and the rush of your business affairs, you remember the Lord our God, and let the church come into your mind.

Let us notice, in the next place, that the church has certain just claims upon the people. It is evident that she has just claims upon the unsaved. No one in a Christian country can deny that he is indebted to Christianity for many privileges and blessings enjoyed daily by all classes. No church is worthy of Christ that does not benefit the entire community in which it happens to be located. To a large extent it elevates the morals, preserves the peace, enhances the price of property, and makes life better in every way. Any one will surely concede that a good Christian church is beneficial to the whole community, and therefore deserves the respect, the love and the support of every patriotic citizen of the community, whether he be identified with the brotherhood or not. This is a fact that needs to be emphasized and kept constantly before our minds, in order that all classes of men may come to give the church a larger place in their hearts. Every man should be willing to love his country, discharge the duties of citizenship, and comply with the just demands made upon him by his state and nation, because of the manifold benefits derived from citizenship therein. So when men are led to see the blessings derived from the benignant influences of Christianity, they will doubtless be willing to respond to the obligations resting upon them with reference to the Christian church.

The church, however, has especial claims upon those that have been saved. She justly demands of every Christian that he shall keep clean her garments. No one has a right to wrap himself in the cloak of church membership and then allow this cloak to trail in the dust and dirt of the earth. When we voluntarily identify ourselves with Chris-

tian people, we owe it to God and to men to keep our church out of the low places that curse the land and wreck human life. We have no right to drag the church into saloons, into gambling dens, or into any place of questionable propriety. No loyal citizen should ever think of disgracing his country's flag, which is the symbol of his nation's glory and power. In like manner, hold high the Cross of Jesus, love the church, and guard well her name, her purity, her interests. Ungrateful is he who stoops to dishonor her name and impede her progress. Church membership is becoming a matter of too little significance, whereas it should have a profound meaning to everyone that possesses it. We need to learn that it is no trivial thing for one to be called a Christian. Membership in the Masonic order is appreciated, and certain it is that no true Mason would bring his lodge into disrepute by an act of disloyalty. Jesus Christ is the Grand Master of our Christian federation, and he makes the reasonable demand upon his followers that they be pure in heart, loyal and true in service. That was a severe reproof of those that claimed to have the light—the reproof that says, "For the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of the light." We cannot serve God and mammon, and having once made God our choice, let us keep pure and clean our life, and pray for Zion, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

But the church rightfully asks of her members not only a pure life, but a life of service. No one thinks of entering a secular fraternity without giving himself in service to that fraternity. He will stand in readiness to respond to any reasonable demand the order may make upon him. So when we come into the fold of the Good Shepherd, we should come with hearts willing to do the Master's bidding. The work of the church, as we have pointed out, is to save the human race from sin and lift it up into righteousness, and in order to accomplish this enormous task we must be unanimous in our readiness and united in our activity. The church justly claims your best service, and we beseech you

in Christ's name to do what you can, whether it be much or little.

“So tired; yet I would work  
For thee. Lord, hast thou work  
Even for me?  
Small things which others hurrying on,  
In thy blessed service, swift and strong,  
Might never see.”

The church claims our financial support. Many can give but little, but they should do what they can. The widow gave her two mites and won the commendation of her Lord. We should give because it is our duty to support the noblest work that ever engaged the attention and efforts of man. Upon you the Master of the harvest has laid the responsibility.

I want just here to make an appeal for the church to be lifted from the low level of a tramping beggar, and given her rightful and dignified place of honor and power in the world. Jesus Christ, the divine head of the church, is no beggar, and yet we must confess with a blush of shame that the actions of some churches and church people would lead a stranger to feel that Christianity is a pauperized institution. A Chinaman in San Francisco once asked, “Who is this Jesus that’s all the time broke?” Well might a blush of shame crimson the cheeks of those who attempted, in their abject beggary, to present the cause of Christ to this foreigner. All things are Christ’s. Before him the angels of heaven fall in praise and adoration, as they behold him exalted at the right hand of the Father’s glory. He has seen fit to commit to his disciples the exalted task of evangelizing the world. It cannot be his will that we should pose as paupers and beg for pennies with which to keep alive his work upon the earth. As saved men and women, we are to face our duty bravely and lovingly, and give of our means to this most royal work. But if any of you should perchance feel that your church is a pauper eking out a bare living by begging bread, you need to throw off

your morbid lethargy, remember the power of God, and cry aloud, "Awake, O Zion, put on thy strength." The church of God is not a thing to be despised by any class of people, for she wields the greatest power on earth, and stands as a thing of strength, of beauty, and of glory, deserving the highest admiration of all. When we behold her, marching from victory to victory, we can only magnify her matchless prowess, and glory in her conquering Lord. God pity that depraved soul who, in his remotest thought, would drag Zion and her ministry from her exalted and dignified place down to the despised level of mere beggary.

Furthermore, you owe the church your earnest prayers. Every Christian should pray for the prosperity and final victory of the Kingdom of God. You should pray for your pastor before he comes to you with his message. When you give him to understand that you pray for him, he will preach with greater freedom and helpfulness. Pray for him, and you will find less in the sermon to criticise and more to praise. Pray also that the spiritually blind may receive their sight, and you will see more hearts bowing before the sovereign rule of our blessed Lord.

Finally, the church has a just claim upon your heart's best affection. Ungrateful is the man who has no love for the church that led him into the Saviour's light. The devout Jew loved Jerusalem, his spiritual home, the place where he held sweetest communion with God, and where he found sweetest peace for his soul. The church is our spiritual home. She has often called us to prayer and to communion with God. The Jew had a custom of engraving upon the palm of his hand the image of the temple at Jerusalem. Let us engrave upon our hearts the image of the church of Christ, and love her with a pure and unselfish love.



## A Vision of God Through Purity of Heart

Text: From Matthew, 5:8: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Let us think first of how we get this vision of God and then consider the blessedness of those who get such a vision.

### I. How we get a true vision of God.

To find God, to possess Him and to do His will, has been for man the task of all the ages. Starting with the world and all its manifold phenomena, Greek philosophy set as its task to find the infinite—the First Cause. For Hebrew wisdom, God was the starting point, and the problem for the believer was how to put himself in line with God. Whether in philosophy or in religion, God has been the chief aim or supreme desire in all the centuries. The Psalmist did not express merely the longing of his soul, or that of Israel, but also the deep yearning of the heart of humanity, when he said: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." (Ps. 42:1-2.) It was to reveal God and satisfy this longing for the human soul that Jesus lived and died. He taught us that to have a true knowledge or vision of God is to have eternal life. "And this is life eternal, that they should know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou wouldst send, even Jesus Christ." (John 17:3.) But when Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," He lifted this problem out of the sphere of science and philosophy, as those terms are generally accepted, and placed it solely within the moral and spiritual sphere. While it is true that God is in all true science, and that all philosophic truth is God's truth, yet He is to be found and known in the sphere of moral activity, and practical obedience to His will. Accordingly, if we are to gain a vision of God, it is to be done, not by turning the telescope upon the heavens, and standing amazed at the vastness of the universe, but by looking through the eyes of a surrendered



will and purified heart. The sciences, of which theology, taken in its broadest sense, is queen, have their proper place in the evolution of human thought and the onward and upward march of the human race. Nevertheless, it is not the trained and keen intellects, but the pure in heart, that feel God's tenderness and know that He is. His Spirit bears witness, teaches, and communes with the pure in heart.

It is appalling how darkened becomes our vision of God and of divine things when sin is cherished and fostered in the heart. Impurity so veils the soul as to hide God from our view. It breaks the flow of our fellowship and intercepts our vision of Him who is too high and holy to reveal Himself to the profane and irreverent. Many of you have stood in some eastern valley and watched the setting sun. As the sun went down in the western sky, some huge mountain arose before your gaze, intercepting more and more the light of day, until soon the whole valley was flooded with night and you stood submerged in thick darkness. Just so some of you today are wondering why there is no light for your soul, no vision of God. The mountain of sin has arisen between you and the light of the world, and whatever light you may have had in former days has fled before the gross darkness of sin. But when sin is cast out and purity enthroned in the heart, it is like the dispelling of night before the brightness of the morning sun. As the hill top and valley are kissed and beautified by the renewed sunlight, so our souls are touched and lighted by God's presence, and we have a vision which fills the heart with joy unspeakable and full of glory. If then you would see God, if you would possess Him and do His will, be right with men, be clean and pure in life, and "keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life."

There is a prevalent idea today that the quality of one's religion depends largely upon the accuracy with which one adheres to certain intellectual and dogmatic propositions regarding the Christian faith. In this age of real enlightenment, when we Protestants boast of our deliver-

ance from medieval theological darkness and night; when we no longer have, nor desire to have, a divine Thomas Aquinas to think for us and dictate what form our faith shall take, it ought to be unnecessary to assert that the Christian faith does not consist of intellectual assent to a formulated and prescribed dogmatic creed. There is a great difference between faith itself and the form in which faith clothes itself. In our servility to form, we separate ourselves from God to worship an image which man has made; if faith is the gift of God, the form of faith is the work of man. The soundness of my faith, the purity of my religion, and the clearness of my visions of God, do not depend upon my accepting in toto the creedal decisions of ecumenical councils. The very genius of the Christian religion opposes intellectual slavery; it antagonizes the perfunctory imitation of the mere copyist, and unqualifiedly condemns the religious and theological parasite. The faith that finds God and worships Him is not an intellectual assent to dogma, nor any other mere intellectual process. It is grounded in and springs out of the moral life. The very core and essence of the Christian religion is fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, who is the mediator of this new and blessed relationship. As Christians, we come into this fellowship by a moral surrender to the impelling power of the inner life of Jesus Christ. We continue therein through a divine companionship which demands devotion of heart and purity of life. It is this fact that makes our text true. It is for this reason that the pure in heart see God. Jesus was conscious of an entirely unique and unutterable fellowship with God which has exalted His name above every other. The measure of the exaltation of Jesus' life above every other is the fullness of the inflowing into Him of the divine life and character. But, mark you, this inflowing of the divine life and character involves the outflow from life of all that is incompatible with goodness, love, purity, and divine righteousness. We, therefore, reassert that if you would find God, if you would possess Him and do His will, be right with men, be clean

and pure in your life, and then shall you surely realize in your experience a blessed vision of God through purity of heart.

“Blest are the pure in heart, for they shall see their God ;  
The secret of the Lord is theirs ; their soul is Christ’s abode.  
He to the lowly soul doth still Himself impart,  
And for His dwelling and His throne, chooseth the pure in heart.

Lord ! we Thy presence seek ; may ours this blessing be :  
Give us the pure and lowly heart—a temple meet for Thee.”

II. With a vision of God comes a blessedness that only the pure in heart can ever know. The verdict of the world’s sanest minds and purest hearts has been that man’s highest good is to be found in possessing God and doing His will. Our highest, most sacred and most blessed relations in life are personal relations ; and our friends satisfy us and enrich our lives according to the riches of the life they reveal to us. In the personality of God dwells all fullness, and he who gets the vision of the boundless riches of the life of God has unfathomable resources of joy. And just this is the blessedness of the pure in heart. Our joy is never so sweet, so profound, so boundless, as when it springs out of an unbroken and undisturbed communion with God. God in the soul is our highest guarantee of transporting delight and rapturous joy.

In Paul’s letter to the Philippians we have what may seem to the uninitiated a strange anomaly. The great apostle, in Roman chains, not knowing what hour his head may fall, rises to magnificent heights and, out of chains and maltreatment endured for Christ’s sake, he cries : “Rejoice in the Lord always ; again I will say, rejoice. . . . In nothing be anxious, but in everything by prayer and thanksgiving let your requests be made unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.” Our joy does not depend on what is without the heart, but

what is within; not on environment, but on the internal condition; not on material and worldly gains, but on moral and spiritual possessions. One may be clothed in purple and housed in a palatial mansion, with all the comforts and splendors of kings, and still be forlorn, miserable, heart-sick and soul-burdened; for that soul upon which heaven sheds no light and to which God is a stranger must be something like a seething caldron of bewilderment, or a deep, dark and dismal dungeon, or a miniature world wandering aimlessly through space, knowing neither its origin nor destiny. But it is not so with those who have found God and have put themselves in harmony with His will. They have chosen the better part, they have found the pearl of great price, they have come into possession of the soul's greatest and priceless heritage, and have thereby become masters of themselves and independent of their environment. That the gospel of Jesus can liberate from world-enslavement and give songs even in the night, has been exemplified in history a thousand times over. It calms and gives poise to the soul even when our little bark is tempest-tossed and rock-beaten. It does not remove the storm, but it anchors the ship. It does not take away trouble nor remove cares, but it lifts the soul above them and makes us see beyond all passing clouds of evil the eternal sunshine.

You have seen the eagle spread out his wings and soar round and round until he rises above the little hill; then soaring round and round until he has reached the highest mountain peak, and still he rises higher and higher until he passes above and beyond the storm-cloud into the clear blue sky. Just so we can mount upon the wings of faith and trust and hope, and rise higher and higher until we soar above the storms of earthly care and perplexing anxiety and rest in the clear sky of God's love and grace. Then all things become ours and for our good. Even death itself becomes to us only a passport into the bosom of the Eternal God for whom we were made and in whom we shall rest and rejoice forever more. But without God we



grow tired and weary of life's rugged journey. We long to lie down like a weary child and "weep this life away." It is then the gentle voice of the Master, "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," comes to us like a new song, imparting that mysterious peace which comes only by resting in God. Clouds are driven from the sky. The day-dawn drives away our night, and the soul becomes "bright with the beauty and celestial glory of an immortal grace."

Oh, sweet, sustaining trust in God, that clears life's clouded sky and lets in the soft, radiant light of the Father's face; that reconciles contentment with aspiration, and blends activity with repose. May this our blessing be!





## BE STRONG.

Be strong!

We are not here to play, to dream, to drift.  
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift.  
Shun not the struggle; face it. 'Tis God's gift.

Be strong!

Say not the days are evil,—who's to blame?  
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O shame!  
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.

Be strong!

It matters not how deep intrenched the wrong;  
How hard the battle goes, the day, how long.  
Faint not; fight on! Tomorrow comes the song.

*Maltbie D. Babcock.*















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